



ARMED POLICE STORM MERRY HILL – FOR TERROR TRAINING



Armed officers take up position in the shopping mall

THIS was the dramatic scene as armed police took over intu's Merry Hill shopping centre in a training exercise preparing officers for the possibility of a terror attack.

Police carrying automatic rifles took up positions outside Nando's restaurant, as actors posing as victims laid strewn across the floor of the Black Country shopping centre.

Images of the operation, which took place on Sunday night and was not publicised in advance, were released to the media on Monday.

Police said they had kept the operation secret to allow the emergency services to respond as they would in a real attack.

It is one of a number of exercises that have taken place across the country to

prepare for the threat of an attack by 'marauding gunmen', following in the wake of attacks in France and Germany.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "The area was tightly controlled and there was no impact on the public."

Activity

"Officers and security staff were on patrol during the night to reassure any local residents who may have been affected by increased activity, noise and presence of the emergency services. However, it was business as usual for the force and officers."

Dan Murphy, general manager of intu Merry Hill, said: "We took part in a live training exercise with local emergency ser-

vices to test their response to a major incident."

"We were delighted to be able to help the emergency services – who work hard to keep our community safe – with one of their regular, planned exercises."

It was reported last summer that Britain's security services were probing at least four plots to commit terrorist atrocities, with shopping centres and stadiums thought to be at particular risk in the UK.

One of the most notorious terror attacks of recent years was at the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2013 Al-Shaabab gunmen murdered 67 people and wounded more than 170.

● More pictures – page 3

PETITION

4,491 sign support for leisure centres

A PETITION against the potential closure of three leisure centres in Dudley borough has now closed, reaching its deadline with a total of 4,491 signatures.

Protesters previously stated that they would be pushing for a full council debate on the matter after they reached the milestone of 3,000 signatures.

Dudley Council wants to demolish Halesowen Leisure Centre, Dudley Leisure Centre and The Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge, and then build two new centres, probably in Dudley and Lye, to save money.

Development boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said it was likely to be another three years before the plans came to fruition.

PLANNING

Christian centre to rise from the ashes

A FIRE damaged Christian centre in Halesowen is to rise from the ashes after plans for its rebuild were approved – in time for an Easter relaunch.

The blaze caused extensive damage to the Zion Christian Centre, in Little Cornbow, in August 2015. Its services have been relocated.

Now Dudley Council has granted permission for creation of a 400-seat auditorium. The centre at Little Cornbow is being renamed Life Central Church on Easter Sunday.

EMERGENCY

Ambulances will be based at fire stations

STOURBRIDGE and Cradley Heath will each get ambulances based at their fire stations under new emergency service plans.

Rapid response vehicles serving the two areas will be replaced by fully kitted out ambulances that will be based at Stourbridge Fire Station and Haden Cross station. West Midlands Ambulance Service bosses say the move will improve patient care.

More than 85 per cent of incidents in the two towns are already responded to by ambulances rather than rapid response cars.

INSIDE

DEAR OLLY, HE'S A POP CHARMER



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Gridlock fear if main rubbish dump moved to Brierley Hill CALL FOR U-TURN ON TIP CLOSURE

DUDLEY Council bosses have been urged to re-think plans to close Stourbridge tip and shift operations to Brierley Hill.

Dudley Council has come under fire over its proposals to shut the borough's main dump on Birmingham Street and redevelop the Leys Depot in Brierley Hill for increased use.

Several opposition members made their feelings known at a full council meeting on Monday night.

They questioned the judgement of proposing to put a main tip near to the Merry Hill shopping centre and spoke of the resulting potential for gridlock on the roads.

There were also claims that the move would be unfair to people living in Stourbridge and Halesowen as they would face longer journeys to get to the refuse site.

Conservative councillor Les Jones, who represents Pedmore and Stourbridge East, predicted chaos on the roads around the major shopping centre if the move goes ahead.

He said: "Let's look at a bank holiday, when Merry Hill gets more traffic than ever and the tip gets more traffic than ever and you're going to put the two together?"

Lorries

"If you live in Stourbridge you will have to go up the main A491 or through Merry Hill. Either one of these roads will be in gridlock. This is simply a bad idea."

Fellow Tory councillor Ruth Buttery, of Hayley Green and Cradley South ward said: "Going to Merry Hill on Saturday will be gridlock with people going with trailers and lorries to get to the site."

Gornal Conservative councillor Anne Millward said: "We need to make sure it is going in the best place."

"If it is not the right place then we will have to look elsewhere."

Report by Richard Guttridge

She added: "Getting into the middle of Brierley Hill is an absolute nightmare."

Halesowen Tory councillor Karen Shakespeare said: "I have been contacted by people in Halesowen and Stourbridge who are concerned about the tip moving to the centre of Brierley Hill."

"I would like to be assured work will be done to look at the road infrastructure."

Under the plans, the Stourbridge tip site would be sold off and council chiefs have insisted that Leys Depot, on Leys Road, Brockmoor, is more suitable for a tip and could take visits from more vehicles.

Dudley Council's environment boss Councillor Hilary Bills explained that the proposals were in the early stages.

"It has got to be subject to planning consent, highways assessment and consultation with the Environment Agency," she said.

"If it doesn't work out, yes we will have to find another site."

Birmingham Street has long been the borough's main site for waste disposal. It is open 9am to 5am every day during winter.

Fundraising effort to help Sam walk



Sam Fellows with family, friends and supporters including, front, parents Jennifer and Simon and sister Lisa

A FINAL fundraising push to help a five-year-old Black Country boy have surgery so he can walk has got under way.

Sam Fellows, from Wednesbury, suffers from diplegic cerebral palsy, which causes constant tightness in his muscles.

He has been told by surgeons that he is ready to have a life-changing operation so that he can walk. The youngster's mother Jen, 37, and father Simon,

42, are running the Sam's Dreams campaign with the aim of raising £35,000 to cover the cost.

The fundraising total currently stands at £29,000 following a party night at the Springfield Social Club in Rowley Regis. Mrs Fellows said: "It was a brilliant night. We had a number of singers including Phil Aaron and Paul Birch and we held an auction and raised about £1,500."

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National TV plea over murder suspect



Niron Parker-Lee – dangerous

A NATIONWIDE television appeal was launched on Monday to catch a dangerous man wanted by police over a murder in Brierley Hill.

A photograph of murder suspect Niron Parker-Lee was being screened on Crimewatch on BBC One.

He is wanted in connection with the death of Mansoor Mahmood, who was stabbed to death in Brierley Hill's High Street on October 15.

Despite an appeal by West Midlands Police and the offer of a £2,000 reward, Parker-Lee has evaded officers.

A police spokesman said: "We have

asked Crimewatch for help to trace the whereabouts of Parker-Lee. Many people watch the show and it is another avenue we can use in our pursuit of the suspect."

There has been no update on the investigation since an appeal was issued back in November.

Mr Mahmood, aged 24, of Bague Walk, was stabbed in the stomach with a knife in the High Street shortly before 5pm on October 15, staggering into a fast food outlet before collapsing onto the floor. He later died in hospital from his injuries.

Detective Inspector Harry Harrison said he believed it was a targeted attack. Officers scoured CCTV and named 19-year-old Niron Parker-Lee, also from Brierley Hill, as the key suspect.

He said: "Someone knows where this man is and I'd remind them that harbouring a wanted man is a criminal offence."

Parker-Lee was described as dangerous, and the public urged not to approach him. Any sightings of Parker-Lee should be reported to police on 999. Or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Police used batons on fans after derby clash

FOOTBALL supporters were hit with batons by police following Friday night's game between Wolves and Birmingham City, which Blues won 2-1.

West Midlands Police has launched an investigation into the incident, which happened close to a subway under Wolverhampton railway station.

Nick Glynn, a retired policeman and Blues fan, captured the moment officers appeared to wield the weapons against Blues supporters on video.

He said he saw officers strike fans with the batons, adding: "It appears to me that the use of force by the police was excessive."

"What threat level do you need to strike someone somewhere where you could kill them? There should be an investigation into what the police did."

Mr Glynn, who was a police officer for the Leicestershire force for 31 years and now works for a human rights organisation, came across the disorder while on his way to the station from Molineux.

He said: "It looked like the fans reacted to being pushed by the police down a bottleneck. There was this absolute pressure to force them through a gap, which was too small. When they did not move immediately, the disorder happened. It lasted for about five minutes."

The 16 seconds of footage shows officers striking supporters with batons.

Match commander Chief Inspector Nick Rowe said officers were 'forced to quell the disorder and used appropriate and proportionate force' in a 'very challenging, yet isolated incident'.

Violent robber gets nine years for reign of terror

A ROBBER who went on a one-man crime spree, stealing three cars and robbing six stores in just 11 days, is this week starting a nine-year prison sentence.

One woman shop assistant was left unconscious by Philip Guest while another suffered a minor stroke, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The 31-year-old, who had a £300-a-day drug habit, had 27 previous convictions involving 71 separate offences. He was armed with weapons, including hammers and a metal bat, on all but one of the raids, said Mr Oliver Woolhouse, prosecuting.

In a raid on the Delph Convenience store in Brettell Lane on January 14, Guest escaped with £1,400 cash and a £800 gold chain belonging to a female member of staff who was knocked out when he hit her on the head. Shortly afterwards Guest snatched £200 from the till at a newsagents in nearby New Street. A woman employee suffered a minor stroke after being pushed backwards as Guest grabbed £570 cash at the Windmill supermarket in Cradley.

Caravan

Police traced Guest to a caravan in Seymour Road, Stourbridge, where weapons used to threaten staff were found.

His crime spree had started at the McColl's store in Hill Street, Brierley Hill, on January 5, where he snatched £400 from the till and fled in a car, which he then filled with petrol without paying at the Tesco Express petrol station in Oldswinford on the following day.

On January 7 he had stolen a handbag in the car park at Sainsbury's Withymoor, before stealing a £795 Renault Scenic loaned to him at the Merry Hill Car Centre. He later stole a van loaned to him at Griffiths MoT centre.

He snatched £30 from Norgrove's newsagents on Drew Road, Pedmore, and stole a £4,800 van from Amlin Motors posing as a potential buyer.

He threatened the manager at the One Stop Shop in Hungry Hill, Stourbridge, with a baseball bat and stole £100.

Guest, of Whitethorn Road, Brierley Hill, pleaded guilty to robbery, theft and making off without payment. The court heard the crimes were to fund his cocaine habit.

Raring to go for Action Heart run



Jane Pugh, her son Gabriel, aged 12 and Louise Sanders get set for the five-mile Action Heart run this weekend

FUNDRAISING runners are lacing up their running shoes ready by the annual Action Heart five-mile charity event in Dudley on Sunday morning.

Starting and finishing at Russells Hall hospital, the event which is now in its 27th year raises thousands of pounds for the Dudley-based cardiac rehabilitation programme.

Jane Pugh, secretary of the Action Heart running club, said: "It is the perfect first race for people,

who would like to run or prefer to walk.

"Years ago it first started off as a way for people to regain their fitness level after coming off the cardiac programme, but now anyone can take part to raise funds.

"It starts and finishes at the hospital and then does a loop around the area from Himley Road, then up by Gornal Crematorium and down to the Pensnett Road.

There are prizes at the end for the fastest female or male – but ul-

timately anyone who wants to have fun can get involved."

Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Mohammed Hanif and his wife, Mayoress, Zabeda Khanam will officially start the event at 9.30am.

The Action Heart programme in Dudley has been in existence since 1978. The Action Heart Centre is located in Russells Hall Hospital, providing exercise and lifestyle management for cardiac patients.

To join the run visit www.actionheartrunning.com website.

Prison officer's skull fractured

A PRISON officer has been left with a fractured skull after being hit by a single punch from an inmate at Oakwood prison, near Wolverhampton.

The male officer was being treated in hospital after the attack on Friday.

Private security firm G4S, which runs the jail, confirmed that one of their officers was attacked but did not comment on his injuries.

However, it is understood that the officer suffered a fractured skull and bleeding on the brain after being punched once as the inmate came out of his cell at unlocking time.

Sean Oliver, the deputy director at HMP Oakwood, said the incident had been referred to the police and that G4S would push for the 'strongest possible penalty' when the case goes to court.

MEP fears EU move to block Brexit

WEST Midlands UKIP MEP Bill Etheridge has warned Britain risks being 'held to ransom' by other European Union members unless it leaves the bloc as soon as possible. Mr Etheridge, also a Dudley councillor, said he feared an attempt to block Brexit via 'rule changes'.

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Paedophile used hidden camera to film a child

A 35-year-old man from Cradley Heath who used a hidden camera to film a child, and downloaded and shared hundreds of indecent images of children, has been jailed.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard how Paul Mann, who had no previous convictions, began searching for indecent material after being introduced to a file sharing website to download music.

Mann also used a camera hidden in a shoebox to film a child and on two occasions 'manoeuvred' his victim.

Prosecutor Mr Christopher O'Gorman outlined how on November 3, 2015, police officers from the child sexual exploitation team carried out a raid at the defendant's home on Woodhouse Way after being alerted to his internet use.

During the search officers found two laptops and a memory stick, with the majority of the indecent material discovered on a laptop hidden in a bedroom wardrobe.

A total of 317 indecent photos and films, including seven Mann recorded, were discovered. Mann was sentenced after pleading guilty to two counts of sexual assault against a child, two counts relating to the production of indecent images of a child, three counts relating to downloading indecent images of children, and three counts of distribution. Mann will serve half of his 42-month sentence in custody. Officers also found 68 cannabis plants at his home. For two drug offences he received two-month jail terms, to run concurrently.

Fatal reaction to anaesthetic

A MAN died after he suffered a massive allergic reaction to anaesthetic given to him in an emergency operation.

Paul Footman, of Terrace Street, Brierley Hill, was being treated at Russells Hall Hospital on November 2 last year when he suffered the reaction.

The 54-year-old was rushed to hospital for an operation to his arm but suffered a cardiac arrest during the procedure when he went into anaphylactic shock in the operating theatre.

Black Country coroner Zafar Siddique gave a verdict of accidental death because of the 'reaction to the anaesthetic' and said Mr Footman had suffered a 'massive allergic reaction'.

Wolves profit but Villa make big loss

WOLVES have announced a profit for the last financial year – as Aston Villa revealed shock losses of £81.3 million. Molineux bosses revealed their £5.8m profit was mainly down to the sale of Benik Afobe.

Storm victim Tahníe 'one of our shining stars'



Storm victim – Tahníe Martin, aged 29

TRIBUTES have been paid to university worker Tahníe Martin who was killed by falling debris as she walked in Wolverhampton city centre.

The 29-year-old who worked at the University of Wolverhampton and was with colleagues when she was struck by the large piece of wooden roofing which fell from a building during Storm Doris last week.

Police are investigating who the Dudley Street building belongs to and whether criminal charges could follow.

Miss Martin, from Stafford, had

been due to start a permanent job with the university as a postgraduate marketing manager after working as maternity cover within the Faculty of Arts since August.

Katharine Clough, director of external relations at the university, said: "We feel privileged and honoured to have worked alongside Tahníe. She was one of our shining stars, a talented and creative marketing professional with an enthusiasm and smile which were infectious.

"Tahníe was extremely popular and will be hugely missed."

The Birmingham City University graduate organised a celebration of 50 years of English at the university, which took place less than 24 hours before her death.

Two of Miss Martin's colleagues with her when she was struck were treated for minor injuries.

Damage was caused across the region including many fallen trees. Halesowen Town FC had a problem when the club's dugout was blown over and in the early hours homes in Halesowen experienced a power cut.

Armed police prepare to combat terrorist threat

A DRAMATIC staging of a response to a terrorist attack took place at Merry Hill shopping centre in Brierley Hill, with dozens of armed police officers acting out the scenario of protecting shoppers and staff.

Assistant chief constable Marcus Beale has said 'recent national and international events' showed the need for police to test their plans to deal with terrorism.

The operation was kept under wraps as actors posing as victims laid strewn across the floor of the Dudley centre on Sunday after it had been shut to the public.

Police carried automatic rifles outside the Eat Central complex as fake explosions and fires were conducted inside.

Mr Beale said: "Routine exercises like this are important as they enable us to test our ability to deal with large scale incidents.

"I would like to thank intu Merry Hill and the community for their support."

He added that the exercise was not based on any threat or intelligence regarding the Black Country shopping centre, apart from general concern that shopping malls are on terrorist hit lists.

Last year a gunman in Munich murdered nine people during a shopping centre shooting spree. In 2013 67 people were killed when gunmen attacked a shopping centre in Nairobi, Kenya.

On Sunday Max Hill QC, the independent reviewer of terrorism laws, said that Britain faced a terror threat not seen since the IRA bombings of the 1970s, and that Islamist extremists were targeting UK cities.

He said that there was 'enormous concern' over the threat posed by British jihadis returning from Syria after fighting for the so-called Islamic State.

Controlled

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "The area was tightly controlled and there was no impact on the public." Officers and security staff were on patrol during the night to reassure any local residents who may have been affected by increased activity, noise and presence of the emergency services.

Dan Murphy, general manager of intu Merry Hill, said: "We took part in a live training exercise with local emergency services to test their response to a major incident."

It was reported last summer that Britain's security services were probing at least four plots to commit terrorist atrocities.



Guns at the ready – armed police take up positions outside a restaurant at Merry Hill shopping centre



Police prepare to engage attackers as a 'victim' hides



Officers during the training exercise at Merry Hill

NEWS IN BRIEF

Big spring clean backed by council

COUNCIL chiefs are backing a national campaign aiming to get half a million people tackling litter this spring.

The Great British Spring Clean will be rolled out for the first time across the UK in March. Dudley Council is encouraging groups and individuals to help pick up litter across the borough.

Volunteers will be given free refuse sacks and can borrow litter pickers, gloves and other equipment. The council will collect the bagged waste.

For details email street.cleaning@dudley.gov.uk or call (01384) 814591.

Tenants urged to give their views

COUNCIL chiefs in Dudley have asked all of the borough's 22,000 housing tenants for their views in a survey to update the housing board.

The housing board is reviewing its constitution to 'ensure it is best placed to make positive contributions in the future'.

Residents can share their comments about the document online at www.dudley.gov.uk/housing. Housing boss Councillor Gave Partridge said: "The board has an important role to play in ensuring that the council provides the best housing service it can."

60 new homes for Rose Hill site

A SCHEME to build more than 60 homes has been backed by planning officers at Dudley Council.

The homes are proposed for Quarry Bank on Rose Hill.

A total of 42 houses would be built under the plans with a mixture of two and three storeys, together with 21 apartments located in three separate blocks.

As part of the project the derelict Albertene House would be demolished to make way for the new homes.

Veltz match boost for Alfie Lund fund

HALESOWEN Town Football Club will be hosting a community day at The Grove on April 1 in aid of charity.

A match will be played against Skelmersdale United with proceeds to the Alfie Lund fund. The club offer half price admission to any supporter who donates a scarf to the charity.

Alfie and his family will be making their second visit to the Grove to help raise awareness of rare genetic disorder MECP2 Duplication. Find out more at www.thealfielundfund.co.uk

Cancer charity sale

A CHARITY sale in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care will be held at a Halesowen church this weekend.

The event will take place at Hurst Green Methodist Church, in Narrow Lane, from 10.30am on Saturday along with a coffee morning.

Admission is free.

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Community hero awards shortlist

FOUR community heroes have been nominated for a top award by a the Mayor Dudley

Now the people of Dudley have been asked to pick a winner from the quartet of nominees for the borough mayor's top award. Councillor Mohammed Hanif said the nominees have all stood out to him during his mayoral year.

The public can now go online to vote for the one they feel most deserves the award. The winner of the prize will be announced at the mayor's charity ball next month. The nominees are Rose Cook, a film-maker who has produced a documentary and charity events celebrating the life of Duncan Edwards; Keith Stroyde, who runs an internet café and support group in Lye; The Diyya Project, which tackles isolation amongst women and teenage girls in the borough's Muslim community; and Shaz Saleem, a Dudley charity fundraiser and chairman of the Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association.

8,500 more smokers stub out the habit across borough

THE number of smokers in Dudley borough is falling with almost 8,500 more people ditching the habit by last year.

New figures from NHS England show there were 45,500 smokers across the borough between April 2013 to March 2014, but this dropped to 37,000 between April 2015 and March 2016. It comes as the use of smoking aids in the borough has also dropped by two thirds in the last three years.

Dudley Council leaders welcomed the drop which they said it was helped by the personal support that people can receive from stop-smoking services.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "We're pleased to see a drop in the number of smokers, aged 18 and over, in Dudley. This is in part due to the personalised support that people who access our stop smoking service receive."

"Working closely with GPs and pharmacies, the service provides support, encouragement and practical solutions for people who want to kick the habit." Councillor Harris said that pressure would ease on councils and the NHS as more people gave up the unhealthy habit.

She said: "Any decrease in the number of people smoking is good news for those individuals and also reduces the demand on council and NHS services long-term. We will continue to work together to help people who want to stop smoking."

Councillor Hanif said: "I have met some incredible people in my duties as mayor of Dudley and it was very difficult selecting just four. I am delighted to be able to share the opportunity to celebrate the work they do in this borough but it is up to the people who eventually wins the award."

Spirit

Nominations for the other six categories are now closed and the winners will be chosen by a judging panel over the next few weeks. They are the Duncan Edwards award for sport, the Cedric Hardwicke award for arts, the Frank Foley award for community spirit, the Thomas Attwood award for education, the Mike Holder award for business, and the William Shenstone award for environment.

The winners and runners-up will be presented with their prize, which is a bespoke piece of glass designed by Allister Malcolm and a certificate, by the mayor at his charity ball and civic awards at the Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill on March 18. To buy tickets visit www.mayorofdudley.org.uk/the-evening and to vote visit www.mayorofdudley.org.uk/the-mayors-award

Tunisia terror victims' families to sue tour operator



Suzy Richards, centre, arrives for the conclusion of the inquests with her surviving son Owen



Joel Richards



Patrick Evans



Joel's uncle Adrian

DEFIANT families of the Tunisia terror attack victims are to sue the tour operator TUI as a coroner ruled their relatives were unlawfully killed. Thirty British tourists were murdered in the attack - including three members of the same Black Country family.

At the conclusion of the six-week inquests on Tuesday, coroner Judge Nicholas Lorraine-Smith rejected suggestions 'neglect' by travel companies played any part in the deaths. But some relatives including Suzy Richards from Wednesbury have now revealed they plan to launch civil action against TUI. The coroner reserved criticism for the Tunisian police's response to the mass shoot-

ing at the beach resort in Sousse carried out by IS-inspired gunman Seifeddine Rezgui.

Among the 30 people slaughtered by Rezgui were Miss Richards' 19-year-old son Joel, her brother Adrian Evans, from Bilston, and father Patrick Evans. Miss Richards' youngest son Owen, then 16, survived the attack.

Lessons

She said she hoped lessons would be learned from the deaths of her loved ones. A statement from Miss Richards said: "We all know our loved ones were murdered by the terrorist who pulled the trigger that fateful day, but what we have been striving to understand is

whether anyone could have anticipated such a terrorist attack and what procedures could have been in place to prevent it.

"I am personally convinced that an attack of this nature was entirely predictable and that there was a responsibility placed upon the Tunisian authorities and TUI to put safety structures and procedures in place."

At the final hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice, Judge Lorraine-Smith labelled the police response 'shambolic' and 'cowardly'.

Nick Longman, managing director of TUI UK, said, the attack had 'shocked and devastated all of us'. Speaking outside court, he said: "As an industry we have adapted."



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Safe homes scheme for young praised

A YMCA scheme that provides a safe home for vulnerable youngsters in the Black Country has been backed by Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris.

The Conservative MP has hailed the impact of the Open Door Project, which has given more than 18,000 nights of support to young people who need accommodation.

The scheme offers safe homes with host families, along with a package of support to help youngsters gain the confidence and skills they need to be independent.

Mr Morris said: "Without a safe home and the guidance of caring, responsible adults many of these young people become jobless, homeless and suffer with low self-esteem.

"This project offers a first class service which is providing care, support and hope for many of our young people who find themselves on hard times.

"I'm keen to help YMCA build on their successes so far, and look at ways the project can expand."

Open Door offers vulnerable young people safe accommodation with host families in the Black Country.

A young person placed with a host will receive support from the YMCA Black Country Group to help them gain the confidence and skills they need to become independent.

New housing scheme close to rail station

FIVE homes could be built near Cradley Heath train station. The three-storey properties have been earmarked on Station Street and were recommended for approval by Sandwell Council.

The final decision will be made at a meeting of Sandwell Council's planning committee on March 1.

Air gun victim was nearly blinded in drive-by attack

Brain tumour patient dances with delight



Alexis Strong and Cariss Evans, front, with supporters and fellow organisers at the fundraising dance event

A WOMAN who had an undiagnosed brain tumour the size of a peach for six years has raised £1,500 for the charity that helped her start dancing again.

Alexis Strong, aged 31, of Rowley Regis, was diagnosed with a brain tumour in June 2016.

She underwent surgery that August at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

The tumour was found after Alexis underwent tests on her eyes after complaining to doctors over symptoms that included headaches, earache and blurred vision.

Instructor

The line-dancing instructor raised £1,500 in a dancing event at Quarry Bank Conservative Club in aid of the Brain Tumour Charity.

She said: "I was lucky that the tumour was benign and that they were able to remove all of it. I wanted to hold the line dancing event to raise awareness of brain tumours and the symptoms."

Also present was fellow brain tumour patient, college friend of Alexis and community ambassador for the charity, Cariss Evans, a nurse aged 32, of Dudley.

A MAN from Rowley Regis said he could have been blinded after he was shot at with an air gun by a passenger in a van which pulled up alongside him as he walked home at night.

The attack last Monday, in Throne Road, Rowley Regis, happened less than 24 hours before a man was injured in another suspected air gun attack in Oldbury (see page 12).

Craig Johnson, aged 25, was walking home from work at 11.40pm when he was targeted. A van pulled up and a man called him over and asked for the time before pulling out the weapon.

Mr Johnson managed to turn away as the gun was fired, escaping with a graze to the side of his face.

Police have launched an investigation but said it was not thought to be linked to a suspected air gun attack in Road End Road, Oldbury, at 9pm the following day, Tuesday (February 21).

Mr Johnson, from Rowley Regis, said he was terrified as the weapon was aimed at him just inches from his face.

Bus

He said: "I got off the bus from work and crossed the road. I heard something slowing behind me and then a murmur of a voice. I got to the vehicle and saw the barrel of a gun. I turned away quickly and that's when he shot the gun. I was hit just above the eyebrow. They then shot my arm and even as they pulled away there was another shot but it missed me. If I hadn't turned away it could have blinded me."

At the time of the attack, he could not tell if his attacker was wielding a real gun. Mr Johnson said: "I was just panicking. All I saw was a gun in my face."

Police believe it was an isolated attack and are examining CCTV.

Plan revealed for Olympic sized pool

A LEISURE centre, featuring an Olympic-sized swimming pool, could be built in Smethwick.

Sandwell Council bosses have revealed plans for the centre and pool as they said investment was badly needed in leisure facilities in the town.

A public consultation has been launched on the plans.

New leisure centres have been built across the borough in recent years but Smethwick has missed out on investment.

Sandwell's leisure boss Richard Marshall, who is also a Smethwick councillor, said the plans were at an early stage. He said several potential sites had been identified.

Smethwick is currently home to the Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre, Thimblemill Baths and Hadley Stadium.

It is not yet known how much the centre would cost but the council has held discussions with Sport England.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



OK now, for cinematic just ready very boring

THE BBC's latest big-budget costume drama has attracted some controversy, with viewers reportedly switching off after 10 minutes because they could not understand the mumbling characters.

Well, I managed half an hour before switching off because it was very dull. Perhaps I should have paid more attention to the previews, where the words "CGI" and "cinematic" seemed to figure heavily. I do wonder whether these words are a secret industry code for "very boring".

Whenever a programme or film is promoted on the basis of its computer-generated imagery, or CGI, it always seems to be far more about showing off the technical prowess than coming up with an entertaining story.

And cinematic just seems to be a euphemism for extremely slow. Endless shots of folk just standing around looking broody, or exchanging knowing glances at one another. Not actually doing anything, just looking like they might.

We can only speculate on what life might have been like in a Nazi-occupied Britain, but I really doubt it would have led to a notable increase in people going around glaring at one another, or moodily dragging on cigarettes in doorways before petulantly throwing the butt away.

The bloke I really blame for all this is Inspector Morse. Before he came along, detective dramas were slick, tightly edited, fast-paced and – exciting. Then when he came along it was all street scenes, random students walking about or riding bikes, with a bit of crime in between.

Maybe next time, somebody could come up with a drama that is a little bit less "cinematic", but a bit more entertaining?

□□□

A UNIVERSITY in Budapest has carried out research into people aged 18 to 24, and concluded that separating them for any length of time from their mobile phones resulted in symptoms akin to post-traumatic stress disorder.

Yep, you've read that right. There is a section of society which finds a few hours without being able to check their credit score or stare at a cute cat video as harmful to them as others do enduring some of the most unimaginable hardships in the battlefield.

The study found that three-quarters of those who took part showed signs of stress, including fidgeting and scratching. Of course, it would be wrong to tar all young people with the same brush, and we must remember how many of this generation have served their country with courage and dignity in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the fact that millions are so attached to their electronic comfort blanket that they can't bear to be separated for a few hours is terrifying. Let's hope we never need to call them up for another war.

No Mr Blair, this time people did know how to vote



LUCY Brown who was asked for a cash donation after an uninspiring date



Tony Blair is calling for people to now change their mind over Brexit



Lord Newby says some peers do not have the 'stomach' to delay Brexit legislation

Thanks for advice Tony, now shove it

THIS is what His Serene Magnificence Tony Blair says about Britain voting to leave the EU: "The people voted without knowledge of the true terms of Brexit. As these terms become clear, it is their right to change their mind." Now, apply those same words to the 1975 referendum when Britain voted to stay in the Common Market. Back then, we certainly voted without knowledge of the true terms. We thought we were joining a free-trade area but were gradually swallowed into an undemocratic and unaccountable superstate. We had the right to change our mind and in last year's referendum we did so. The difference between the 1975 and 2016 referendums is that in 1975 we had no idea what the EU would become. Now we know exactly what it's about. So thanks for the advice, Tony, now shove off. Aren't you supposed to be bringing peace to the Middle East or something?

LORD Newby says some peers do not have the 'stomach' to delay the Government's Brexit legislation. Stomach? I suspect what's missing is a little lower in the anatomy. The House of Lords knows that if it frustrates the will of the people, then the people might start asking why we need 850 Lords in the first place. Might things be greatly improved by having 100, 50, or none at all?

A READER says he likes the term "de-extincting," as applied to woolly mammoths, and wonders what other things might be de-extincted. He suggests good manners, respect for elders and Beer at Home means Davenport. Any other suggestions for the de-extinction list?

INCIDENTALLY, good luck with de-extincting respect for elders. The snag is that it has probably never existed. Who was it who said: "The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show dis-

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



respect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise"? It was Socrates, writing about 2,500 years ago. No change there.

THINGS to do on a rainy day. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford has a folklore exhibition featuring "a collection of objects highlighting folk traditions of Oxfordshire including a Morris dancer's outfit, whit horns, lighting appliances and a lace maker's dick pot."

A READER asks whether I have any strong views of the Church of England's latest furore over same-sex marriages. Not really. It is hard to get worked up about the opinions of people who believe, without any evidence, that some benevolent sky-god is watching over us. I don't really care what superstitious people think about God, the Devil and heaven and hell, so why should I fret about their views on genitalia? As far as we can tell, the Church of England is morphing into a social club for people who just want to be sweet to each other, with none of that nasty, old-fashioned stuff about sin. More than 20 years ago I forecast the creation of the Church of Jesus Christ The Really Nice Bloke. I am sure it has a great future.

AN Appeal Court ruling this week suggests the law may soon permit civil partnerships, currently restricted to same-sex couples, for heterosexual couples, too. But could the whole process be overtaken by the astonishing rise of gender rights? There is growing pressure for people to be able to "self-identify" their gender. Lawmakers in California have proposed a

"non-binary" choice for people who wish to be neither male nor female on official documents including birth certificates and driving licences. In a world where people can be any gender they choose, or none, any couple could qualify for a civil partnership simply by claiming to be the same sex.

MEANWHILE, one US university already offers a choice of six gender identities for new students: male, female, trans male/trans man, trans female/trans woman, gender queer/gender non-conforming and "different identity". Confused? It has hardly started. An online guide offers no fewer than 81 definitions of sexual possibilities and gender-identity issues. Something for everyone?

THANKS for your continuing accounts of truly awful first dates. A reader tells me of an over-confident lad who took his girlfriend on a hot-air balloon flight and romantically proposed to her at 2,000 feet. She turned him down. They were stuck in that balloon basket for the next 45 minutes with the pilot and by the time it landed the mood on board was positively polar. Moral: always plan your escape route.

LUCY Brown, a London-based clothes designer, had an uninspiring date through an online dating agency. She decided to let the man down gently with a text explaining she was not interested in a second meeting. She was astonished when the 'normal and sweet' man replied saying he was devastated and asking for 'a contribution for the drinks I spent on you'. She sent him £42.50 and made an equal donation to a donkey sanctuary. And they say romance is dead.

A READER writes: "I purchased a hanging basket of spring flowers this weekend. The instructions say: Keep out of draughts."

TALKING POINT



Don't judge people by the way they look

I HAVE never really been a follower of fashion, as people who know me will testify. I wear what I feel comfortable in and cannot see the point of paying £50 for shoes or trousers when pairs for £10 or £20 do the same job, particularly as we are meant to be living in times of austerity.

That does not mean I don't care about my appearance. And, of course I have no problem with people wishing to pay over the odds if that's what they want. That's their prerogative, and if they can afford it, why not?

But remember, a trend is just that. Weeks/months down the line, everyone will be wearing something different.

Take holey jeans, for example. What are those all about? During a weekend away, I saw hordes of youngsters wearing these.

It was ironic there was a town nearby called Patcham – the sort of thing my mum would have done if I had worn holey jeans!

While on the same break I was served in one shop by a girl with hair of so many colours she looked like she had bathed in a vat of Skittles – and could have been the inspiration for a McFly hit. And she had so many facial piercings it was like talking to a pin cushion.

But joking aside (and I really am) it is these kind of attitudes and prejudices we need to stamp out.

So often we hear of girls pressured into being a certain size, or bullies hiding behind social media anonymity, all because their targets have different looks or tastes or beliefs to that of their own.

The shop girl I encountered was most helpful and pleasant, as one would expect.

Isn't it time we looked beyond people's appearances, be it tattoos, dress sense, size or whatever it may be? Let them be comfortable in their own skin. The old adages of 'each to their own' and 'leave people be' spring to mind.

We cannot expect everyone to look or dress identically, follow the same football teams or be fans of the same kind of music, television programme or comedian, for example. Variety is the spice of life, they say, and the world is richer for it.

Some people like, and are even turned on by, body art, for instance. And, while that may be not be my cup of tea, it does not mean I would have any less time for anyone with a scorpion inked on their back or some obscure Hebrew inscription on their arm.

Employers take note. I'm sure many job opportunities go begging because a candidate does not look the part, or has gaping holes in their ear lobes. It doesn't necessarily mean they cannot do the jobs.

Don't be intimidated or put off by these people, they are human beings after all. Oh, and they have feelings too.

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We can all do something about rubbish

I'VE never contacted papers or the media before and yes the NHS, Brexit, and the economy are all massive issues. Sadly as mere individuals, there is little we can do to influence what will be.

However, something we can all take accountability over and actually achieve something is litter!

We in the Black Country are blessed with some stunning countryside and it is so noticeable the amount of rubbish either tossed out of vehicle windows or bins that are left to build up and up and the over spill is left to degenerate.

Neither I or my kid was ever brought up to toss rubbish out of the window, but to take it home and dispose of it.

People enjoy a stroll over Clent only to leave the waste neatly tied up in a bag for others.

Surely a little publicity would help and local fast food chains (in particular McDonald's) should take some responsibility for educating customers about keeping Britain tidy!

On a tangent, council tips are so regimented and post code allocated. Surely if you are disposing of rubbish in a council designated refuge tip,

what's the issue? Granted you would think you will use the closest one? In my case Romsley, yet we are allocated to Stourbridge, double the distance.

We go to Stourbridge but there are some who once turned away, head for the nearest bit of green belt and deposit their rubbish. Lapal Lane being a prime site.

Let's take responsibility and dispose of our rubbish. We might be doing our best to become a third world country but rubbish disposal is in our hands.

MR C WITHERS
Halesowen

Tax rich to solve crisis in the NHS

JEREMY Hunt continues to whinge on about a lack of social care facilities and an ageing population, but successive Governments have been aware of the demographics for decades.

The NHS was formed from nothing to become the largest employer in the country by introducing National Insurance and increasing income taxes.

Since their election in 2010 this Government has not only reduced taxes and NI contributions, but have also used our public services as a means to repay a huge deficit caused by global financial institutions, making so-called 'efficiency savings'.

If they had abolished 'tax evasion' practices and increased tax and NI instead to finance the deficit in 2010 we would not be facing the crisis we have today, but that would have forced the wealthy to cough up.

Mr Hunt, your 'Government is to blame!'

MICHAEL CLIFF
Wall Heath

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at

EU, we want some of our money back

THE European Union fails to protect its members and also fails to compromise – no nations are better off financially.

The Greek nation is in hock up to its olives, open door policy is not working, the so-called elite are desperate to keep us trapped and frightened of the UK leaving. The German people are voicing their concerns about keeping funding the EU, especially when we stop paying into it.

I believe that there needs to be independent auditors because the EU budgets have not been signed off for 20-odd years – we might be due a rebate.

We help to pay for office blocks and other EU buildings, plus the wine cellars. We want some of our investments back. Only pension money for the over-paid civil servants and the unelected bureaucrats need to be paid.

MR R GOODALL
Wordsley

Message for Blair: Shut up!

I WOULD like to thank Tony Blair, if I had any doubts about the way I voted (and I don't), Mr Blair just confirmed I was right.

Now here's a man who can be trusted and his words relied upon (not).

How dare he speak out about Brexit and ask people to 'rise up'. He lied to this country about weapons, he led us into a war and lives were lost. So anything this person says I hope people do the opposite. The reason he speaks is not for the good of this country but for the good of his own pocket.

Mr Blair please stay where you are wanted – in the wilderness. You had your chance and blew it, at great cost to hundreds of families and the people of this country. The things you did we are still living with and there are no signs of it getting better.

Thanks, and in the words of a Black Country lad, 'keep ya trap shut'.

PETE LOWE
Brierley Hill

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

The big re--veal at last!

THE long-awaited announcement of the line-up for this year's V Festival was revealed this week – with P!nk and Jay Z the surprise big headliners.

Rumours had been rife for weeks ahead of the announcement with the smart money seemingly on Ed Sheeran as the likely big draw, writes Diane Davies.

Meanwhile Drake, Kaiser Chiefs, Mumford and Sons and Mary J Blige had also been touted as possible headliners by the music press.

Both Jay Z and P!nk have been fairly low profile in recent years musically. Raunchy American singer P!nk has not had a solo album out since 2012 and not toured since 2013/14.

It is 10 years since P!nk made her debut V appearance. Festival promoters say the 'pop icon' will be entertaining the crowd with her elaborate stagecraft and choreography.

Teens

With more than 100 million records sold and a 20-year career, Jay Z is one of the best-selling musicians of all time. Although the US rapper is almost better known as Mr Beyonce for young music fans having not had a solo album out for almost four years. The 47-year-old has not toured since 2013/14.

He and wife Beyonce recently announced that she is pregnant with twins but have not revealed her due date – though it is rumoured to be around the beginning of August.

The V Festival takes place at Weston Park in Staffordshire and Hylands Park, Chelmsford, on August 19 and 20.

Having gained a reputation in recent years as a festival focusing on the 'teen scene', last year's headliners were Justin Bieber and Rihanna, there are a number of acts which will satisfy the usual crowd.

'Godfather of garage' Craig David, Jason Derulo, Jess Glynne, local lads The Vamps, Sean Paul, Dizzee Rascal, Clean Bandit, James Arthur and rising sensation



Rapper Jay Z who will be headlining this year's V Festival



Pink performs at Birmingham's LG Arena on her last tour



The Vamps, with singer Brad Simpson from Sutton Coldfield, will play V



Making her fifth V Festival appearance will be Ellie Goulding

Stormzy have all been announced this week. Ellie Goulding will be making her fifth V appearance and there is a return for Rudimental.

Scouting for Girls and Busted tick the 'guitar band' box while Madness always provide a lively show and will appease the more mature members of the crowd.

Pete Tong was the first name released by the organisers, last Friday, as a sneak tease to the big reveal this week. Tong is one of the most successful

electronic dance DJs worldwide and will be creating the sound of summer to both sites with his Ibiza Classics orchestra show.

Tickets for V go on general sale at 9am on Friday. A weekend ticket will cost £175 plus fees.

As well as day and weekend tickets there are camping tickets – including VIP and 'glamping' options.

A 'pod pad' sleeping two people costs £1,366 while an Airstream Prince Trailer for five will set visitors back

£6,500. This does include access to the VIP area though.

Around 70,000 attended last year's V Festival. Headliner Justin Bieber found himself making all the wrong headlines over the weekend with claims that he was miming and had been out partying to the early hours.

● **What do you think of the line-up.** Email us at wolverhampton.chronicles@expressandstar.co.uk or write to Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

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Doctors 'forgot' to tell father about his tumour

A FATHER from Sedgley died after doctors failed to tell him about a cancerous tumour.

Wayne Evans was suffering from severe stomach cramps when he was sent for tests – but after hearing nothing back from his GP, he assumed his results were normal.

However, three years later, his health began to deteriorate and after visiting his doctors, he was told a mass was found on his previous scan and he required urgent care.

The tumour was now inoperable and despite undergoing chemotherapy to treat his cancer, the 41-year-old died.

The GP practice, Ridgeway Surgery in Sedgley, has agreed in an out-of-court settlement to pay a six-figure damages sum to his wife, Clare, after his scan results were filed away.

Bosses at the surgery confirmed that since the error occurred practice systems had been changed.

Sales assistant Mrs Evans, 45, said: "My life with never be the same, I cannot accept that Wayne's fate lay on a piece of paper for three years.

"He was forgotten about and it wasn't until he went back in pain that alarm bells started ringing."

Shocked

She added: "Wayne was shocked when his doctor asked if he'd had any follow-up appointments as he'd never been contacted after the initial tests.

"His tumour had been left to grow for three years and by the time they tried to operate, it was far too advanced and he died in 2013.

"If it had been removed when he had the first tests, it's likely he would be cancer free today and we wouldn't have such a gaping hole in our family."

In a legal case against the practice, medical negligence specialists Hudgell Solicitors had alleged that the tests in



Wayne and Clare Evans pictured before Mr Evans was struck down by illness

2008 – which showed the abnormal growth – had been wrongly filed away at the practice after being sent from Russells Hall Hospital.

Mrs Evans said life for her and their daughters Natasha, 23, and Chloe, 19, will never be the same again. She added: "I don't want anyone else to go through what we've been through."

Wayne passed away at home, with Clare, Natasha and Chloe by his side.

Wayne had launched the legal process himself in 2012 after learning of his diagnosis and the error.

A spokesman from Ridgeway Surgery said: "We can't comment on this case due to our duty of confidentiality; however we would like to say how sorry we are about Mr Evans death and pass on our condolences to his family, since this error occurred we have changed our practice systems to prevent this from happening again."

Hudgell Solicitors secured the six-figure settlement for Clare and her family, which takes into account avoidable pain and suffering Wayne endured, and the impact on their lives.

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Gas station plan at site of pool hall

A GAS filling station looks likely to be built on the site of a former snooker hall in Dudley.

Dudley Snooker & Pool Club, in Stafford Street, was gutted by a fire two years ago. It has since been demolished.

Now plans have been lodged with Dudley Council to create a gas filling station at the site.

Three people would be employed at the station, according to planning documents submitted by surveyors BSP Design.

It will be used to supply liquefied petroleum gas to vehicles.

BSP Design expect 15 to 20 cars would use the station each day.

At the site, four gas tanks protected by barriers will be installed.

More than 50 firefighters battled the blaze which gutted the snooker hall.

Middle age mirth at hall

COMEDIENNE Jenny Eclair's latest show will be visiting Dudley Town Hall in May

The 'How to Be a Middle Aged Woman (Without Going Insane)' tour is at the Dudley venue on May 18. The 56-year-old TV comic has appeared on Grumpy Old Women, Loose Women and Splash!. In 2010 she finished third in I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!

Tickets are £17, call (01384) 812812.

Borough libraries start new chapter

PLANS to introduce new ways of working in libraries and archives in Dudley have moved a step closer.

The Dudley Council-run library service, Archives and Local History Centre will enter into a 'staff mutual' - where employees have more control - in the spring.

The authority says that this will give workers greater freedom to introduce new ways to generate income, which they will be able to reinvest into staff training, update facilities and expanding the range of services available.

At the Dudley Archives and Local History Centre, on Tipton Road, the mutual will look at ways to maximise the exhibition space and create more events for the public.

The council expects the arrangement to reap financial savings across the board without impacting on day-to-day services.

Transferred

All council staff will be transferred over to the organisation. The council is now carrying out the formal legal work before the final process is complete.

Council leader, Pete Lowe, said: "We value our libraries and archives service in the borough and especially our staff who have

By Lucy Thompson

worked hard to deliver some of the best library services in the country.

"Unlike other authorities that are choosing to close their libraries, we are going down the route of mutualising our services to protect them long term.

"The mutual offers an exciting opportunity to do things differently and I am confident it will achieve the best outcomes for our libraries and archives service users."

Greenwich Leisure was chosen as the preferred partner to bring their expertise to Dudley libraries and archives, running the mutual over the next five years.

The company has been running leisure and library services since 1993, and currently manages libraries in the London boroughs of Wandsworth and Greenwich, and in Lincolnshire.



The endangered yellow-breasted capuchins at Dudley Zoo are getting a new enclosure

Monkey see monkey lots to do at zoo

THE first stage of Dudley Zoo's £295,000 revamp has begun with work underway to create a new home for its critically-endangered yellow-breasted capuchins.

The outdoor area for the capuchins off the Small Primate House is being rebuilt at a cost of £20,000.

Indoor spaces will give extra space as well as a climbing frame and high platforms for the arboreal species, while new glass windows will enhance viewing opportunities for visitors.

Curator Richard Brown, said: "Work is progressing really well. We've kept the capuchins inside while contractors have demolished the old exterior and are building the new enclosure, which will give the species lots of additional space when it's finished.

"The work is all on schedule and is looking fantastic. We hope to have the primates in their new enclosure in the next few weeks."

Museum was a top attraction

DUDLEY'S Museum and Art Gallery has been named as one of the country's best-loved attractions - two months after it closed.

It was controversially closed after more than 100 years to try and save money, despite fierce opposition in the town. It is now likely to be used by the council for conferences, whilst a new museum is to be opened in the Archives Building on Tipton Road.

The museum was named among the top 50 free attractions in the UK by travel firm National Express, alongside the likes of the Lake District and Hadrian's Wall, and declared the best in the Black Country.

Councillor Paul Brothwood, leader of the opposition UKIP group, said: "It was incredibly popular. I think the council will massively regret closing such a wonderful attraction."

Clothes shop in Poundland

A CLOTHES shop has opened inside the Poundland store in Dudley town centre. PEP&CO will offer women's, men's and kids' budget priced fashion.

PEP&CO managing director Adrian Mountford said: "We might be a new brand but we're one that customers love once they find us. By bringing PEP&CO to Poundland in Dudley, we're giving people access to the brand much more rapidly than we could on our own."

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Community role for church house

A CHURCH house which has been empty for decades has undergone a major revamp to become a community centre.

Bosses at the George Road Community Church in Oldbury decided it was time to bring the property back into use and saw it as an opportunity to support community groups looking for a base.

It has stood next to the church since the 1880s and had once been lived in by the church caretaker but has been empty for years. The house has been given a makeover and now includes activity areas, meeting rooms, an office and disabled toilets.

The centre was officially opened by Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Julie Webb. Church leader June Whitehouse said: "Nobody had lived in it for decades and it was falling into disrepair. The refurbishment was a £34,200 project. We are already seeing lots of interest from the community."

The project recieved funding from Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust.

Elaine is given chief nurse role by Trust



Elaine Newell – appointed as chief nurse in Sandwell

SANDWELL and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is has announced the appointment of Elaine Newell as its chief nurse.

Elaine is the former director of midwifery at the trust, which runs Sandwell, City and Rowley Regis Hospitals, and is noted for transforming standards of care within maternity services.

She has been acting chief nurse since December last year and was given the job after an external process overseen by NHS Improvement.

Her appointment has been welcomed by chief executive Toby Lewis: "Elaine will bring a distinctive and professional voice reflecting the concerns and hopes of our patients and their carers. I have every confidence that she can drive the recruitment and retention of nurses and midwives."

Commenting on her appointment, Elaine said: "I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead the nursing profession at the Trust as we work towards the opening of the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital."

Police summit on how to tackle gangs

SPECIALIST police officers from around the country met in the West Midlands to discuss how to tackle gangs and violence on the region's streets.

The event hosted by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) David Jamieson was held at Aston University. It's purpose was to inform delegates of the work so far by the PCC's commission on gangs and violence, as well as sharing best practice from around the country and assessing the impact of gang culture in the West Midlands.

Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Ashley Bertie, who chaired the event, said: "This was a hugely successful event that took an in-depth look into the complicated issues surrounding street gangs."

"It explored key issues, such as how we can build stronger community links, developing a multi-agency action plan."

Also attending were youth workers, community groups and practitioners. In total, more than 100 people took part.

Surgeon is struck off after sending love letter to patient

A SURGEON who wrote a love letter to a female patient has been struck off.

Dr Sachiendra Amaragiri, 59, carried out a colonoscopy on the patient at Russells Hall Hospital.

Three months later, the doctor from Consett in County Durham, wrote a letter expressing his feelings to her.

The patient reported it to the police and, following a Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service hearing, Mr Amaragiri's name was removed from the medical register.

In a letter read out at the hearing Mr Amaragiri wrote: "When you stepped

into my clinic for the first time, I was suddenly stunned and taken aback by your presence. You induced this unusually extraordinary tender feelings of weakness in my emotional setting. To this day I have been unable to fathom this power you hold on me."

The tribunal was told the incident occurred after the woman, known as Patient A, was admitted to the hospital in July 2015 with stomach issues. She was referred to Dr Amaragiri and in September underwent the procedure. Amaragiri, who was not at the hearing, described his letter to her as 'a moment of madness' and expressed 'sincere regret'.

He wrote to the General Medical Council saying: "I never had or have any intention of causing any hurt in any manner. I did invite her for a social drink and I acknowledge this was a mistake. I reassure you I've not taken advantage of my position as Patient A's surgeon."

The tribunal stated: "Dr Amaragiri's failure to comply with the relevant professional standards was serious and his conduct brought the profession into disrepute. The tribunal accepts this was an isolated incident. However, doctors practising medicine are required to respect the dignity and privacy of patients."



Dr Sachiendra Amaragiri

Survey launch on hate crime

A SURVEY aimed at tackling hate crime has been launched by West Midlands Police, backed by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson in partnership with the University of Leicester.

The aims of the project includes identifying the support needs of victims, identifying victims' experiences of support services and identifying ways of improving existing support services.

Findings and recommendations from the survey and research will then be used to help improve support provision in the West Midlands and inform the commissioning of support services for those affected by hate crime.

Last week, new figures showed instances of hate crime had risen by more than a quarter in the West Midlands since the European Union referendum.

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12 Glassworks bid held up as skip firm stays put

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, March 2, 2017

Road closed in gun probe



Road End Road in Oldbury was cordoned off by police after reports a man may have been shot with a BB gun

POLICE closed off a road in Oldbury after a man was found with leg injuries. Officers are investigating suggestions he was shot with a BB gun or air weapon.

Road End Road was closed between Tat Bank Road, at Road End Medical Centre, and Gresham Road, by Road End Primary School last Wednesday morning. Around 10 officers were stationed at the scene carrying out a forensic search.

The previous night a man took himself to hospital with minor injuries. Reports locally suggested there may have been a shooting. West

Midlands Police spokesman Briggs said: "Police were alerted at 9pm by staff at City Hospital reporting a man who'd presented himself to A&E with a minor wound to his leg.

"It's understood the man sustained the injury while in Tat Bank Road, Oldbury, earlier that evening.

"At this stage it's unclear how he came about his injury; the road was cordoned off to allow for a forensic search."

The road closure caused major delays on surrounding roads during the morning rush-hour.

BOSSES at a skip hire firm have thrown a major restoration of an historic glassworks into doubt.

No 1 Skip Hire is based on the site of Chance Glassworks in Smethwick, which is subject to a multi-million pound development.

But the skip hire firm says it will not move until an alternative site is found.

No 1 Skip Hire was told it must leave the site when its application to continue operating was denied by Sandwell Council last year. It was given until April to move but the firm has launched an appeal, requesting to be given two years to leave, and remains on the site.

The company has also threatened to take the council to the High Court over the initial decision to refuse planning consent, making matters more complicated.

Suitable

The company operates on an acre of land on the Spon Lane site and the development cannot go ahead while it remains in place. Bosses say 18 jobs would be lost if the firm is forced to stop trading and insist they have no plans to leave unless a suitable site in Sandwell is provided for them to go to.

Roger Page, of planning agent Page Swinford, which is acting on behalf of No 1 Skip Hire, said: "Our client wishes to remain on the site operating until such a time it is feasible to relocate and it is for Sandwell Council to find alternative sites.

"Providing they can operate, at some stage, elsewhere we do not wish to stand in the way of this development."

The Chance Glassworks Heritage Trust has said its exciting re-development plans, for homes and shops, will change the face of the largely derelict glassworks site but members have grown frustrated by the skip hire firm's refusal to budge.

Graham Fisher, from the trust, said: "It could delay us considerably. We are not trying to stop them from having a business, we want to work with them to find a solution which is better for them as well."

Goodness Nose how they raise so much



Staff and students at Q3 Academy Langley will be making their laughs matter for Red Nose Day

AN Oldbury school is gearing up for its traditional Red Nose Day fundraiser.

Q3 Academy Langley will host a table football competition, sponsored silence and bake sale for this year's event on March 24.

Last time around, the schoolchildren, staff and teachers of the West Midlands raised more than £650,000, which

was put to work helping vulnerable people in the area, all over the UK and across Africa.

Q3 Academy played its part by organising a bake sale and by wearing silly jumpers, raising more than £1,100 to help to fund projects like Sandwell African Women's Association which provides a safe place for African refugees affected by war and violence.

Bravery medal rethink call

WARLEY MP John Spellar has called on the Government to 'think again' after bomb disposal officers in Northern Ireland were denied a medal for bravery.

Mr Spellar, a former Minister of State for Northern Ireland, is among a group of Labour MPs campaigning for a review after the Cabinet Office rejected a move to award Ammunition

Technical Officers based in the province a General Service Medal.

The request by Northern Ireland's most senior Army officer, Brigadier Andrew Rowe, was thrown out over fears it would mean admitting a full military operation is ongoing in Ulster.

Mr Spellar said: "These bomb squads put their lives on the line every week and their contribution deserves recognition. The MoD should think again." He was among a number of signatories

to a letter to the Defence Minister that was written by Tom Blenkinsop, chairman of Labour's backbench committee on Northern Ireland.

Mr Blenkinsop said: "The support Ammunition Technicians in Northern Ireland provide the Police Service of Northern Ireland in tackling bomb threats to civilians is vital. They carry out this work with a professionalism and bravery that deserves to be recognised."

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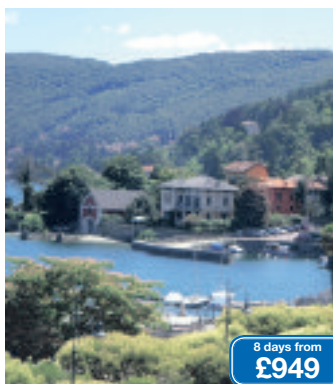
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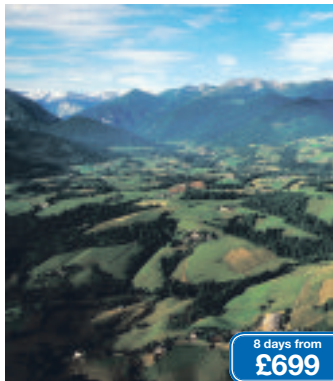
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WORK is gathering pace on a multi-million pound development aimed at boosting business in the Black Country.

The ground is being cleared at the Pennsett Estate ready for four industrial units to spring up.

The units will cover 130,000 sq ft and are being built at London and Cambridge Property's (LCP) flagship estate at Kingswinford.

The development, called Prime Point, is being backed by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, the joint body of business leaders and council chiefs tasked with encouraging new business and jobs in the area.

Once completed, towards the end of this year, companies will be invited to move onto the estate.

The foundations are currently being laid at the huge business park,

portfolio manager, said: "Void levels on the estate are low and we are receiving enquiries every week from companies looking for units in this size range, so we believe that this first phase will be very popular with businesses looking to relocate to the area."

"This is a significant investment for LCP that will be a real boost for the local economy."

"We are excited that the first phase is under way and look forward to welcoming new tenants to the Pennsett Estate."

The estate is one of the largest business hubs in Europe covering 185 acres and home to almost 200 companies



Roadshow for energy and telecom complaints

FED-UP residents will be given their chance to get complaints about energy and telecoms companies off their chests.

An ombudsman roadshow will visit the Black Country over two days to try and help hold companies to account.

The event will run at Market Place, Dudley, between 9am and 5pm, on today (Thursday) and tomorrow.

Visitors will be able to register any complaints during the event. Anyone requiring help is asked to bring along necessary documents and any correspondence they have had with the companies.

Ombudsmen help hold companies to account and can help settle disputes.

Lewis Shand Smith, chief ombudsman, said: "It's important that residents in Dudley know their consumer rights and don't put up with bad service. Complaining should be an easy, hassle-free experience.

"If you're still in a dispute with a company after eight weeks, ombudsman services can look into the case for free and provide a resolution."

The roadshow is touring the country.

The most dangerous junctions revealed

THE most dangerous junctions in the Black Country have been revealed.

In Dudley the Cinder Bank Island has seen the most incidents with nine, while the Castle Gate Island has seen eight.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said that plans were in place to improve the Cinder Bank Island.

She added: "The council works closely with police and other partners to identify, fund and carry out vital

By Doug Wootton

improvements on roads to maintain safer routes for all.

"In fact we are planning road safety improvements for Cinder Bank this year and are looking at opportunities for improved speed enforcement on Birmingham New Road.

In Wolverhampton, Chapel Ash Island, just outside of the city centre, saw 13 accidents during the same period.

A4031 Trinity Way saw eight minor incidents and one serious incident. The roundabout between the A457 Oldbury ringway and the A4034 has seen seven reported incidents.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for highways and environment, Councillor David Hosell, said: "These figures include ac-

A Wolverhampton council spokesman said: "We regularly monitor accident data and use the information to develop a programme of road safety improvement schemes as part of the Transportation Capital Programme.

Crafty pensioners find way to help zoo

A CRAFT group for pensioners in Dudley have been making wooden homes for animals at Dudley Zoo, including bats and penguins.

Senior Citizens Enterprise Woodwork Group, based at Meadow Road Youth Centre, spent six weeks building bird boxes, bird tables, bat boxes and penguin boxes.

Dudley Zoo conservation officer Chris Leeson said: "We're really thankful to the group members, who were all willing to offer their services freely and build the boxes for us. Their talents have saved us hundreds of pounds if we'd have had to buy the boxes ourselves."

Woodwork group chair, William Darby, aged 82, said: "We were glad to be of help and it's lovely when you know they're going to such a good cause."

For more details about the woodwork group contact Mr Darbu on (01384) 620396 or email wdarby@skv.com

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Thread letter day for famous faces



Goldie and Noddy Holder feature on the tapestry

FROM Olympic swimmer Ellie Simmonds to music legend Noddy Holder and to fashion icon Erin O'Connor.

The famous faces of Walsall have been threaded in to a stunning tapestry by a team of volunteers.

The 11 unique tapestries represent each area of the borough, picturing events, places and names.

Each area of the borough had its own story to tell, be it the Pel-sall poppies, meeting under the clock in Willenhall Market Place or the excitement of when Cilla

By Marion Brennan

Black came for the first Blind Date wedding. The tapestries also tell the story of celebrities including Paralympian Simmonds, Slade star Holder, musician Goldie, actress Meera Syal and Judas Priest lead singer Rob Halford.

They also include amateur athlete Glyn Marston, who has raised £120,000 for charity over the years.

He said he was honoured to have his name embroidered, even though it was spelled incorrectly – as Marsden.

He is included in the tapestry devoted to Willenhall fundraisers, fea-

turing an image of the late Christmas-crazy Hilda Creaney whose festively decorated home raised thousands for charity.

Glyn's name and those of Reg and Anne Wrighton, who for years organised an annual old folks dinner for the Willenhall community, are stitched around the edge of Mrs Creaney's embroidery.

Mr Marston, aged 54, said: "It's the gesture that counts."

"To say that I am honoured is a great understatement, I can't believe that my name is alongside Mr and Mrs Wrighton and Hilda Creaney," he added.

"Mrs Creaney's fundraising, in particular, is legendary in Willenhall.

Thrilled

"I'd heard about the tapestry, which is a fantastic project, but it never occurred to me that I would get a mention. I was choked when I found out."

He added: "I did notice that my name was spelled wrongly but I haven't raised it with anyone - I'm just thrilled to see it placed alongside such great Willenhall people."

Mr Marston is currently gearing up to take part in a gruelling 1,400km cycling race from London to Edinburgh and back again at the end of July.

He will wear a jersey featuring the flag of his home town Willenhall throughout the journey, which cyclists have to complete in under 100 hours.

The father-of-two has been fundraising since 1993 when he quit smoking. On this occasion he will be raising money for the charities St Giles Walsall Hospice, Macmil-



From left, Colette Mumford, Glyn Marston and Sheila Fawkes



The Blind Date wedding, which Cilla Black attended, is depicted

lan Support, Cancer Research UK and Harry Will Walk.

He is also planning to cycle across Europe later this year in aid of charity.

Each one of the Silver Thread tapestries took at least 2,000 hours to sew, a task shared by an army of volunteers from the local community.

It was the inspiration of Walsall Council's creative development team, which was disbanded last year. People came from far and

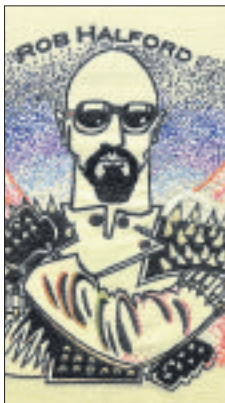
wide during the first three months of the year-long project to have their say on what should feature in the tapestries.

Artist Hunt Emerson turned their stories into illustrations which were then stitched into more than 12 square metres of fabric.

Each square features a different area of the borough, capturing Walsall's living history and diverse geographical communities. It is currently on a tour of the West Midlands.



Actress Meera Syal



Rob Halford of Judas Priest



Brownhills model Erin O'Connor



Paralympian Ellie Simmonds

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Prison is now plagued by drugs and violence

VIOLENCE and drug problems have spiralled at Featherstone Prison because of staff shortages and 'significant prisoner unrest', according to a damning report released on Tuesday.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales (HMI Prisons) described relationships between staff and inmates as poor and said it was 'perhaps no surprise' the facility had declined 'so quickly and so sharply'.

In a 2013 report the prison was described as a 'very positive establishment'.

But, according to chief Inspector of prisons, Peter Clarke, the current senior leadership team does not have 'sufficient knowledge or oversight of some key areas', including use of force and the unregulated segregation of inmates self-isolating.

Mr Clarke said the only way for the prison to improve is for the leadership team to 'get to grips with the serious issues' identified in today's report.

Intelligence

The report, prepared after an inspection at the end of last year, said the prison had 'well-managed and analysed' intelligence that highlighted problems with drugs, violence and mobile phones, but that insufficient action was being taken to address the problems.

In regards to former 'legal highs', inspectors said the prison was not monitoring the 'full extent' of the problem and 'did not have a strategy or action plan to reduce drug availability' in general.

Inspectors also raised serious concerns around the living conditions of inmates.

They found that the segregation



HMP Featherstone – damning report released on the prison's sharp decline

unit had been damaged last summer and was still not usable, while the temporary segregation unit was in a 'very poor condition' and not properly staffed.

In the temporary unit, about half of the designated cells were out of use due to damage, and had been for 'a considerable time'.

The whole prison was found to be in a 'poor state of repair'. This was reflected in the 'disgraceful condition' of showers and the state of the cells, which were described as 'dirty, poorly

ventilated, covered in graffiti and in need of decoration'.

Mr Clarke has now made recommendations to Featherstone bosses in order to improve its performance.

These include: Analysing all violent incidents and taking coordinated action; taking appropriate safeguarding action for those inmates self-isolating; monitoring the full extent of drug availability and putting an action plan in place to reduce the supply; and fully refurbishing showers and maintaining cells to an acceptable standard.

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Express & Star

No riots, just Ricky in pink ripping it up

Kaiser Chiefs
Barclaycard Arena
Review by Diane Davies

ONCE they were the Angry Mob, a riot predicted in every headline. Everything else seemed average and they loved us less and less every day.

But there were no angry young men in sight as Kaiser Chiefs hit the stage at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena in a scene reminiscent of Phoenix Nights.

With the glitter balls, sparkling ribbon backdrop and K C balloons all that was missing was Peter Kay. But these are the Kaiser Chiefs, this is their arena tour and no-one knows how to put on a show better than frontman Ricky Wilson – he does not do 'relaxed'.

It is 100 per cent energy from Ricky the moment the band hit the stage and after the first number the 'social club scene' makes way for the big Kaiser Chiefs show. A huge neon K and a C lit up the stage with a backdrop of large electronic screens, while smoke belled out amid an impressive lights show.

Album

They opened with We Stay Together, one of the better tracks from the fairly tepid new album, their sixth, Stay Together.

But the heat was quickly turned up as they then ripped into the favourite Everything is Average Nowadays. Personally, I thought the last album Education, Education, Education and War was their best work for years and arguably at least as good as Employment which provided the 'classic' hits. Stay Together is a 'nice' album, it certainly shows their versatility but is far less edgy. However, the one thing you can guarantee from the Kaiser Chiefs is an irresistibly catchy tune and usually a snappy chorus. Singles Parachute and Hole in My Soul are perfect examples of these and fitted in perfectly with the energy of the show, keeping the crowd bouncing and singing away merrily.



In the pink – Ricky Wilson on stage at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham

A Kaiser Chiefs gig is one great sing-along. The whole set was peppered throughout with hits including Everyday I Love You Less and Less, Ruby, Modern Way, Never Miss a Beat, The Angry Mob, I Predict a Riot and Coming Home.

The encore saw a gutsy rendition of

Ever Fallen in Love by the Buzzcocks and, of course, the obligatory Oh My God.

Having gone down a storm at the Forest Live gigs in summer on Cannon Chase, Kaiser Chiefs are rumoured to be one of the headline acts at this year's V Festival. Let's hope so.

Just 8 out of 10 as it was short on laughs

Sean Lock,
Birmingham Hippodrome
WITH his shaven head, the comic could have been re-named Shorn Locks. Complete with facial hair, it was an almost unrecognisable Eight out of Ten Cats favourite that took to the stage at the Hippodrome.

Until he spoke, that is. Then there was no mistaking that cheeky, straight-talking persona.

Cynical as ever, Lock was immediately in the flow, with tales of job prospects and exams: "There's a gas fire at home with more certificates than me."

He got off to a flyer, keeping the laughs coming for a good while, including one about his 83-year-old father learning to speak Chinese.

"I hope so anyway, because we only got him a one-way ticket."

But then it just seemed to peter out. Whether it was the material, or just the delivery, he was, unfortunately unable to keep the momentum going and the laughs dried up.

There were some gems in there, his description of Alan Sugar's face as 'like a toffee apple rolled across a barber's shop floor' for example, and a brilliant frolicking lamb impression.

But, after support act Paul McCaffrey had suitably warmed the audience up, it was overall a hit and miss affair after a particular solid start.

He was right about the price of cinema food, though.

Mark Shipp



Deloris (Alexandra Burke) is not happy at the thought of hiding away in a convent

Hallelujah, there's nun more wicked than this

Sister Act

Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton

CALL me a sinner if you wish but I found this musical wickedly funny. And Strictly speaking any production which carries the stamp of Craig Revel Horwood on it – after all he is absolutely FAB-U-LOUS darling – has to be on to a winner.

Revel Horwood is the director and choreographer of Sister Act, which runs at the Grand until Saturday. The story revolves around Deloris Van Cartier, the sassy singer who witnesses a gangland murder and is placed out of harm's way in a convent.

Disguised as a nun, and under the suspicious watch of Mother Superior, played superbly by Karen Mann, Deloris helps her fellow sisters find their voices and finds she actually enjoys the friendship, sisterhood and music at the convent.

Deloris is played by previous X Factor winner Alexandra Burke, and Hallelujah she still has it in bucketfuls after a successful run in the Bodyguard. She belted out those songs, combining her powerful voices

THEATRE REVIEWS

with accomplished acting skills. She did take a little time to get warmed up in the role of Van Cartier but once she was in full stride it was hard not to take to her.

Aaron Lee Lambert brings a 70s soul-induced vibe to the role of gangster boss Curtis and Joe Vetch is superb as 'Sweaty Eddie' the lovable cop who has a massive crush on Deloris.

The plot is, of course, ludicrous. While in the convent Deloris takes over the dull choir rehearsals and turns the tone-deaf nuns into disco sensations. In doing so she sends the dwindling church attendance through the roof.

Most of the cast double up as members of the band, so welcome to the world of saxophone-toting nuns. All very surreal of course but thoroughly enjoyable.

Sue Attwater

Vandalised bridge is as good as new again



Railings replaced – Councillor Keiran Casey, centre, with the trust's Don Davies and Harry Brookes

NEW railings have been installed to improve safety on a bridge after vandals ripped the old ones down.

The Rosemary Crescent footbridge, Dudley, was only opened 18 months ago but its railings were torn down in November.

The Woodseton Charitable Trust (WCT) received £22,000 to have the bridge built. Upper Gornal and Woodseton ward councillors Keiran Casey and Adam Aston were shocked after the rails were vandalised and backed the drive to have the bridge repaired.

Harry Brookes, chairman of the Woodseton Charitable Trust, said: "It's great that we have the support from our local councillors. Their help has been much appreciated."

"The bridge was a project which WCT had worked on for some time. We wanted to improve local footpaths and the walkways which residents and children use."

Shocked

Councillor Casey said: "When the trust got in touch with me, I was shocked to hear about the mindless damage which had been done. I contacted the council straight away to find

out what could be done to retrieve the broken railings which had been ripped out and thrown in the brook and to install new barriers to ensure this was safe for residents and school children."

"New railings have now been installed on the bridge and myself and Councillor Aston are very happy that we have been able to help. The trust is a fantastic group of local people who have raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for our area."

The trust has worked to preserve and enhance the landscape in Dudley borough since it was formed in 2007. It was given £22,000 for the bridge project by environmental company Veolia.



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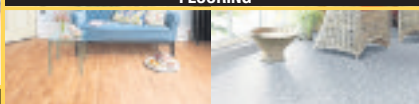
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Use vintage style for furnishing your home

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



IT still amazes me that some people still spend a fortune on expensive modern furniture that is often destined for a limited shelf life rather than paying less for quality vintage items that have already stood the test of time.

Thankfully, the message IS getting through that you can furnish a home with vintage pieces on a limited budget – and that the overall effect will be unique rather than just the same as everyone else's!

And the mix-and-match look never really goes out of fashion, the key to interior design is really always individual style.

Another thing people should remember is that vintage furniture does not need to be housed in vintage properties, it looks great in any kind of home and you should never feel dictated to by a property's age.

You can pick up some real bargains in the saleroom at the moment, suitable for all rooms in your home.

Old quality oak, pine and mahogany dining tables can be bought for very reasonable prices and you can get chairs to accompany them that don't match – or need to! Again, if styles are mixed up and still look good you can't go wrong.

Old chairs, sofas and chairs for a sitting room are again very affordable, although you should check for any rips or staining before you buy unless you don't mind getting a piece re-upholstered (getting a vintage item properly restored is well worth the spend, however).

Look out for old pine tables, dressers and butcher's blocks for a kitchen, the 'free-standing' look is still very popular, and old

cupboards can be re-painted to serve as valuable storage space.

You will also find some lovely vintage bedsteads and headboards in the saleroom, plus some really nice old wardrobes – we sold a gorgeous Edwardian wardrobe, complete with original mirror, for a staggering £30 in the February auction.

And of course there are numerous items on offer in the saleroom for a vintage-style home office, including lovely old desks, captain's chairs, file boxes and desk lamps.

Hatstands, old boot racks and vintage chairs would complete the look for a hallway and you can pick up some great pieces of vintage garden and pub furniture for a conservatory.

As always, check for any signs of damage before you buy but don't be afraid of a little restoration work, it will be well worth the effort!

- Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.
- The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Bridgnorth on Tuesday April 4. Viewing will be during the weekend and on the Monday prior to the auction. New sale bidders are advised to attend the saleroom early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.

Clever and practical item never out of fashion



Umbrellas have a long history

THERE are so many items that surround our daily lives that are subject to the trends that we see changing on a regular basis, things we see as practical and essential.

February 10 was National Umbrella Day a day set aside to celebrate this clever, practical item, the British weather is so often rainy and most of us own a humble umbrella but are not aware of its lengthy history.

The word comes from the Latin 'Umbros' which means shade or shadow.

It is said to evolve from the simple shelters and canopies made from leaves by the primitive civilisations. It was suggested that the Normans brought umbrellas to England in 1066 but there is no proof.

They were however 'trendy' in France in 1620 and are first mentioned in written publications in England in the early 1700s.

They would have been heavy items, made from wood, whalebone and oilskin, simply a canopy to keep the rain off.

By the late 1700s they were a lighter, elegant fashion item carried by ladies to keep them protected from the sun.

In the late 1800s steel ribs were used and

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



gave birth to the modern umbrella. The foldable pocket umbrella was created in 1928.

Natural fabrics or leather would have been used initially, sometimes waxed to repel the rain.

Later a fabric called 'Gloria' which was a mix of silk and wool or cotton became popular, then nylon and acetate.

Compact

Today microfibre nylons with water repellent coatings keep us well protected. There is so much choice, classic, automatic, compact, windproof and transparent.

We see lace versions for weddings, tiny paper ones in our drinks based on the original paper designs from China, novelty and logo printed corporate, unusual shapes, large garden canopies, retro reflective and colour

changing. The latest trends for 2017 offer all over animal prints, internal prints of a bright blue sky with soft fair weather clouds.

Rainlax have a brand new reversible double layer product and the transparent bubble dome shaped umbrella is set to make a comeback, often popular for weddings but extremely practical with great coverage and visibility.

Over 33 million umbrellas are sold in the USA every year, most are made in China, and one city there has over one thousand factories where the machinists are meant to sew 40 umbrellas an hour.

I have several umbrellas in the house, two compact, one old freebie corporate one and a transparent version from my son's wedding last year, (surprisingly much needed for a short storm in Tuscany) and inevitably I don't have one in the car when I need one!

Perhaps it is time to purchase more and accessorise them with each bag and shoe combination for that 'on trend' look.

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Public health officials are keen to get more people to have their flu and pneumonia jabs – as well as receiving the vaccine for shingles

A few points to be clear on for getting your jabs



There are many myths about vaccination

IF you think vaccines are only important for babies, think again.

Infectious diseases, including flu and pneumonia, remain a big killer in older age-groups, in spite of modern antibiotics.

Recent figures show more than 80 Brits die from such diseases every day – and even if a disease isn't normally fatal, like shingles, it can still cause significant pain for as long as a year. Uptake of the shingles vaccination has fallen, however, and public health officials are always keen to get more people to have their flu and pneumonia jabs.

After all, why risk catching a potentially deadly or painful disease, if you can avoid it?

WHAT IS SHINGLES?

Shingles is a very painful infection of a nerve and the area of skin around it, caused by the herpes varicella-zoster virus, which also causes chickenpox. Around a third of people will get shingles in their lifetime, including half of all over-65s.

Following a chickenpox infection, the virus can lie dormant in the body and may reappear as shingles. You can have shingles more than once, and though the vast majority of the time it isn't a serious threat, the illness is fatal for around one in 1,000 over-70s who develop it. The shingles vaccine is

given as a single injection at any time of the year, and reduces the risk of developing the illness. Those unlucky enough to still get it are likely to have milder symptoms, which last for a shorter time.

FALL IN UPTAKE

Uptake of the shingles jab fell from 61.8% in 2013/14, to 54.9% in 2015/16, and the International Longevity Centre UK (ILC-UK), a think tank which looks at our ageing society, says this may be because people have only really been thinking about flu vaccinations, and perhaps don't even know about the shingles jab.

Alternatively, the drop may be down to GP surgery notification policies, says ILC-UK policy and public affairs officer, David Eaton.

"GP practices have different ways of encouraging people to come in and get their jabs," says Eaton. "Some are really on the ball with texts and calls to notify people, and others are just catching up with that, so it's a bit of a postcode lottery."

BUSTING MYTHS

There are several myths about vaccines as well, notes Eaton, including that you can get the disease from its vaccine, or that they make you feel unwell.

"You can't get the disease from having the vaccine – that's one of the biggest myths we have to dispel," he stresses. "Your arm

might be a little sore for a day, and 99% of the time, that's the worst side-effect you'll get."

"Vaccines aren't just for kids – there is a real reason why we should be giving them to people throughout their lives. It's the one proven, effective way we've got of preventing diseases."

OTHER GROWN-UP VACCINES

As well as shingles, many strains of flu and pneumonia are preventable through vaccinations; the main ones offered to adults in the UK are:

• Flu – annually from age 65

Nobody wants to get flu, but as well as being unpleasant, it can have serious complications in the over-65s, as well as pregnant women, and children and adults with an underlying health condition or weakened immune system. • Pneumococcal – single vaccine at 65

The pneumococcal vaccine, also known as the pneumonia jab, protects against serious and potentially fatal pneumococcal infections caused by the streptococcus pneumoniae bacteria. These infections can lead to pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis, and at worst, cause permanent brain damage or death. Over-65s only need a single pneumococcal vaccination to protect them for life.

Welcome pack of goods as the refugees settle in

A FRIDGE freezer, hoover, six cereal bowls and a pressure cooker. It reads like a shopping list for a student leaving home for the first time.

But the household items are part of a three-page inventory list for Syrian refugees coming to the West Midlands and Staffordshire.

It is a template for a family of six, including a baby in a three-bedroom home. It breaks the items up into rooms including kitchen, bedrooms, living room and then additional items.

They include mattresses, smoke alarms, a hoover, dinner plates, and a washing machine. A thick double blanket, three-seater settee and energy saving light bulbs are also on the list.

Quotas

The inventory is part of 'a guide for location authorities' given out by the Government as part of the Syrian refugee resettlement programme. Already, 51 refugees from the Middle East have been rehoused in Staffordshire.

In Walsall, the council agreed to take in 20 refugees up to May and in Wolverhampton, 100 will be bought in by 2020. In Dudley, two families moved in June last year, with the council agreeing to take in 20 over the next five years.

The programme was launched by the Government to help those families fleeing civil war in the country. Nationally, 20,000 will be bought in, with the programme designed to assist local authorities take in their agreed quotas.

Councils receive £8,520 per refugee accepted, plus £4,500 to provide education for every child aged five to 18 years. Further funding is available to the council for each refugee every year.

It starts with £5,000 for a refugee's second year, and ends with £1,000 for the fifth year. Councils are urged



The household items featured on a three-page inventory list

to consider the availability of school places, health provision and property market before deciding on the number bought in.

The authorities must ensure appropriate accommodation for new arrivals, then provide a 'welcome pack' of groceries reflecting their culture. A five-day timetable has also been suggested for authorities welcoming refugees, starting with meeting the families at the airport.

The guide suggests providing a £200 cash allowance for each family member before a guided visit to the Jobcentre, registering with a dentist and GP

and a tour of libraries, churches and train and bus stations.

Councillor Roger Lawrence, chairman of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, said: "Councils have received fully-funded packages from the Government and we are confident that will pay for all the associated costs."

"I want to emphasise that all refugees coming to this country under this programme have been vetted by government."

Councillor Lawrence was not aware of any Syrian refugees having so far been settled in Wolverhampton.

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Wed 5th	Tyntesfield (Bristol) National Trust Coach Club - see page 14	National Trust Members ALL SEATS ONLY £18			B
Tue 11th	Abergavenny Market & Labels, Ross-on-Wye 2 For Tuesday's - see page 11	£16	£15	-	C
		2 SEATS FOR £27			
Sat 15th	Oxford as you please... City Explorer Tours - see page 12	£16	£15	£13	C
Mon 17th	Weston-super-Mare... On Easter Monday	ALL SEATS ON £10			
Tue 18th	The Original Cotswolds Excursion (Moreton-in-Marsh Market & Bourton-on-the-Water)	£15	£14	-	D
		2 SEATS FOR £25			
Wed 19th	Vera Lynn Show at Ye Olde Punch Bowl Inn (Bridgnorth) Carvery & Entertainments Show NEW - see page 9	£30	£30	-	G
Sat 22nd	Highclere Castle (Downton Abbey home of the British Drama series)	£36	£35	£30	C
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MAY 2017

Tue 9th	Bourton-on-the-Water & Broadway 2 For Tuesday's - see page 11	£16	£15	-	D
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Tue 16th	The Original Cotswolds Excursion (Moreton-in-Marsh Market & Bourton-on-the-Water)	£15	£14	-	D
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Sat 20th	Cambridge as you please... City Explorer Tours - see page 12	£20	£19	£18	B
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Sat 3rd	Wellesbourne Market & Stratford-upon-Avon	£14	£13	-	D
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Mon 5th	Waddesdon Manor (Buckinghamshire) National Trust Coach Club - see page 14	National Trust Members ALL SEATS ONLY £18			
Wed 7th	Penkridge Market & Trentham Shopping Village	£15	£14	-	D
Sat 10th	Eastbourne... as you please NEW Seaside City Explorer Tours - see page 12	ALL SEATS ONLY £22			
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Pots and plants you can pack up and go

A garden designed for the ‘rent generation’ who want moveability will be a highlight of the first new RHS show in a decade. Hannah Stephenson talks to experts about ‘pack-up-and-go’ gardens

SO, are you one of the millions who can’t afford – or choose not – to buy your own property? If you love your outdoor space, it may be time to consider how to move your garden.

With nearly 50 per cent of householders aged 25 to 35 renting a property, and an increasing number of landlords paying over gardens to make them ‘no maintenance’, taking your garden with you is a concept many of us might consider.

It’s a theme adopted by acclaimed garden designer Tanya Batkin, who will be showing her ‘Moveable Feast Garden’ at the new RHS Chatsworth House Flower Show in Derbyshire from June 7-11.

Batkin explains: “My daughter is ‘generation rent’ with a tiny outdoor space – we are talking one pot. She had to have something bombproof, so we went for some succulents, some houseleeks.



“If you have room for a half barrel, you could put in one bamboo, some grasses and a heuchera, which is great for all-year-round interest. It gives you a nice combination of form and foliage.”

Her show garden is made up of a series of brightly coloured wooden planters in palette and half-palette sizes. They are all on wheels, she points out, so easy to move.

‘Rent generation’ gardeners can buy wheeled stands and trolleys with which to move all manner of containers. There are many portable compost bins on the market – some of which are available free through local authorities – as well as lighter, resin-based containers, self-contained, easy-to-move water features and stick-in-the-ground solar lighting.

And you don’t have to limit yourself to having flowering ornamental plants in your moveable pots, says Batkin.

“Because my show garden is called ‘Moveable Feast’, there’s going to be a lot of edible planting. Things like bay, rosemary and lavender will grow happily in pots.”

Planting with a view that you will not be in one place for long is a growing trend, says Mark Sage, head of horticulture at Wyevale Garden Centres.



“We continue to see a real interest in instant solutions from customers who are renting rather than buying properties now, and are more transient and wanting to take their purchases with them from house to house.”

Plants with all-year-round interest such as viburnums are proving popular to give structure, flower and berries, and can be grown in pots which you can move, as well as camellias and perpetual-flowering patio roses, such as ‘Carpet’ roses and ‘Fairy’ roses, he says.

Edibles are also easy to grow in pots and are moveable. Dwarf fruit trees are also increasing in popularity, says Sage.

“Even in our ‘grow your own’ selections, we’ve seen an increase in patio varieties, simply because people have smaller spaces.

“Things like terrace patio fruit, varieties which are grafted on to a rootstock and will grow to about 5ft tall, will thrive in smaller spaces. We have tomato ranges which are suitable for pots and hanging baskets. Growing in smaller spaces is a focus for us.

“The continued interest in ‘grow your own’ has seen the breeders working extensively on getting really good, productive, great tasting fruit and vegetables suitable for container gardening, particularly with fruit trees.”

Here are some of Batkin’s tips to help the ‘generation rent’ maintain and move their gardens:

:: If you have large plants or shrubs, gently contain wayward stems with strips of hessian to reduce damage during your move.

:: Don’t water your pots the night before the move, which will just increase their weight.

:: If you’re going to make a container garden, bigger is always better. One large pot or a group of three medium-sized pots make a bolder statement than 15 little pots. Check drainage holes are big, as small ones tend to clog up. Place crocks or broken tiles in the bottom to aid drainage.

:: Layer your planting by adding summer or spring bulbs to the pot first.



Japanese quince are great for cutting and for Japanese planting schemes

Ideal for brightening up shady spot in the garden

BEST OF THE BUNCH – Japanese quince (Chaenomeles)

THESE ornamental shrubs with spiny branches are often grown as wall shrubs and are really useful for brightening up shady spots with their red, pink and orange blooms.

The flowers unfurl on bare branches in February and are great for cutting and for Japanese planting schemes. Pale-flowering cultivars blend better with other shrubs, while the more vivid types are more suited to walls. Some early varieties have yellowing fruits in autumn. Chaenomeles speciosa ‘Moerloosei’ is among the best, producing beautiful apple-blossom flowers in early spring. These hardy shrubs will thrive in most soils and are easy to grow, but they do need cutting back immediately after flowering to stop them becoming untidy.

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Courgettes
GIVEN the news that courgettes are now in short supply because of the terrible weather in Murcia, southern Spain, where most of our courgettes come from, it’s about time to grow our own.

It’s too early to start them off now, but have a

look at seed catalogues to decide which type you want to grow. Sow seeds singly in small pots indoors in late April, planting out the seedlings in early June when all danger of frost has passed, hardening them off first. Space them 60cm apart in each direction for compact types, or 90cm-1.2m apart for regular varieties, which need a lot of room. Water young plants regularly and apply liquid tomato feed every week when the fruits are forming. You won’t need more than two or three plants to have more than enough to eat all summer.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

:: Start to sow slow-maturing bedding plants such as African marigolds and antirrhinums under glass

:: If weather permits, prepare seed beds on free-draining sandy soil by lightly forking over the surface, breaking down large lumps and raking the soil to a fine tilth

:: Continue to bring in forced bulbs for indoor flowering as they become ready for extra warmth

:: Examine stored dahlia tubers for any sign of rotting

:: Continue winter-pruning trees and shrubs

Grow your skills with a gardening qualification

By Hannah Stephenson

NOT sure how to prune properly? Want a beginner’s guide to vegetable growing? Fancy a new career as a garden designer?

Whatever your horticultural bent, there is a course out there for you, from one-day taster courses to degrees and recognised horticultural qualifications. But where do you start?

If you are looking for a change of career, you may opt for an officially recognised RHS course which can give you a significant qualification after two or three years.

Alternatively, you may opt for a day here, a day there working on a particular skill which you want to master in your own garden, such as propagating, pruning, wildlife gardening or planting with perennials. And you may learn as much from their fellow students as you do from the lecturers.

Andy McIndoe, garden design consultant, winner of 25 consecutive gold medals at Chelsea Flower Show and tutor at MyGardenSchool (www.learningwithexperts.com/gardening), the world’s first online garden school, explains: “People have to think about the time commitment.

“With online courses, people need to be really committed to it and they have to put the effort in and have to relate it very much to what they want to get out of it.

Lecture

“Sometimes people think they are just going to watch the video or turn up to a weekly lecture, thinking it’s going to give them all they want. But it’s a huge subject and the chances realistically of it covering what you’ve got in mind are quite remote.”

Studying on a computer has its place, but there’s no substitute for digging in and getting your hands dirty, says McIndoe, who gives his students practical assignments after each lecture.

“I encourage them to take pictures of a particular situation and tell me how they are going to deal with it, identify plant material or other aspects of horticulture. If it’s a trees course, I tell them to pick a situation, pick a tree for it, tell me what they are going to plant with it and we build on the practicalities of that and the design element as to how they are going to use that as part of a planting scheme.”

Those thinking about a career in horticulture should choose their courses carefully and their choice may depend on whether they are going to be employed or self-employed, he says.

“Doing an RHS course is fantastic and if you can get a job as a trainee on a private estate or specialist nursery that’s great, but it’s all about application. You have to work for relatively little for a while to get the experience.

“Plant knowledge is key, whether you are doing productive or ornamental horticulture.”

“There’s no substitute for practical experience,” he continues. “I think that’s vital. The idea that somebody’s going to read a book or watch a lecture and think that’s



An officially recognised RHS course can give you a significant qualification after two or three years



Whatever your horticultural bent, there is a course out there for you

going to teach them how to do something is unrealistic.

“You need someone to take you out there and do practical stuff. That is so important, whether you’re planting or embarking on garden design. What it comes down to is being able to cope with the practicalities of the real situation.”

He laments that there are not enough horticultural apprenticeships, although the organisation Grow (www.growcareers.info)

provides advice on apprenticeships and careers in horticulture.

There are 93 approved study centres running RHS courses that lead to qualifications, many of which offer practical teaching.

Potential students wanting further information and a full list of all the centres offering RHS courses can be found at: www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/qualifications-and-training/rhs-qualifications



Online learning may also be an option for students

McIndoe says that if you are after a degree in horticulture, Pershore College – the national centre for horticulture – is still an industry leader (www.warwickshire.ac.uk).

A variety of shorter workshops are also run by the National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.uk), while the Workers’ Educational Association (www.wea.org.uk) offers a number of courses on a wide range of aspects of gardening at centres throughout the country.

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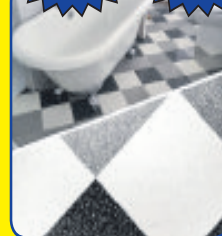
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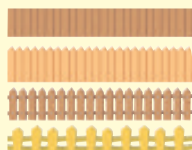
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Robbie's a pal but I still see old mates

He's so God Damned nice. Talking to Olly Murs is like talking to the ultimate cheeky chap. There's no edge and nothing unpleasant.

He's as unlikely to throw a strop as Mother Teresa, he's as unlikely to be caught with his pants down as the local lollipop lady. He's the antithesis of Kanye and Kardashian, the polar opposite of Katie Hopkins. He's as unlikely to demand a jar full of purple Smarties on his backstage rider as a lion is to marry a dolphin.

Good God, Olly, stop being so flippin' nice. And yet that's what the public admires about him. While so many who are thrust into the spotlight are dysfunctional and difficult, Olly is precisely the opposite. He is the archetypal boy-who-done-well, the classic boy next door who made it big.

Olly was working as a recruitment consultant at Prime Appointments, in Witham, before he featured on The X Factor. And he's still in touch with his old officemates now. The closest he'd come to stardom was appearing on Deal or No Deal in 2007. He wasn't much cop, taking home a tenner after messing up royally.

Like many kids, he'd dreamed of hitting the big time. But after forming a band, The Small Town Beggars, that got nowhere fast, he pretty much gave up. And so, after his Deal or No Deal experience, he jacked it all in and went backpacking around Australia. Then, when he returned, he decided to have one last crack at fame. He rolled the dice in 2009 and is landed on X.

LUCK

"X Factor got me started, but I think for me it's just about hard work. I respect people and I'm nice to people and I've also had a bit of luck. People like my music and have bought into me so I try to give people a different sound and a different vibe. It's just been a great journey. I've been very lucky. I hate to say luck because we all know it isn't all luck. You've got to have a bit of talent."

Olly was the runner-up on the sixth series of The X Factor in 2009. His debut single, Please Don't Let Me Go, debuted at number one while his debut album was certified double platinum after shifting more than 600,000 copies. And since then, it's been one-way traffic. Olly has been moving higher and higher and higher as he's shipped a colossal 10 million records, published an autobiography called Happy Days and released three further albums which have all gone to number one and achieved between two and four platinum discs for sales that have hovered around one-million-per-record. The only thing he hasn't done is fill his mantelpiece with awards. Olly has been nominated for six Brits and two Ivor Novellos, but always been pipped. Still, there's still time to put that right, especially with the release of his fifth album, 24 hrs.

"I think it's the best thing I've done, yes. It's certainly my best songwriting. I wrote it with some great writers and as a body of work it's the best thing I've come up with. Right now, I'm just looking forward to the fans listening to it.

"When you've done four albums, it's like what am I going to do for my fifth? Where do I go? So what I've always done in my career is try to move forward.

"

The new album will be accompanied by another megaton tour. Having stayed on the road from March to August with his last set of arena shows, for Never Been Better, which included three dates at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena, Olly is back for more. This time he'll be playing the city's Genting. At

Olly loves the high life but he's Mur likely to be found in Essex



present, he's scheduled just the one date, for March 24, but don't bet against him returning for more.

"I'm looking forward to it," he says. "To do these sort of venues is fantastic and I never get bored of it. I always hope that one day I'll move up and play stadiums. That's certainly on my bucket list."

He's learned from the best in the business. Olly was part of One Direction's Up All Night Tour in 2012, when he joined the boys in the USA. And he was also the special guest for Robbie Williams' Take The Crown Tour, in 2013, which earned \$20 million from nine shows and included four sell-out gigs at Wembley and the same number at Manchester's Etihad Stadium.

"Working with people like Robbie Williams and Gary Barlow has been great. It's always good to work with people like that and get close, to see those guys going about their work. I'm grateful to them for giving me the opportunity to play on their tours.

"Hopefully one day there'll be a young singer on one of my tours and I'll try to guide them and give them advice and help"

Not that Olly takes his success for granted. In the fickle world of pop, he knows that what goes up must come down. Though a crash is more unlikely that a bad dinner from Gordon Ramsay, he knows it might not last forever.

"I'm not a fool. I know that at some point it'll all be gone. But then it might not – who knows it might go on for the rest of my life. I'll continue for as long as my fans in the UK want me to. If I move into other careers, like TV or radio, that would be cool. You

You've got to tick all the boxes really if you want to get somewhere

don't know, the opportunities are endless."

For a cheeky happy like Olly, they probably are. He's the sort of entertainer who'll still be around in 20 years.

The Nice theme continues when he's not on pop star duty. Away from the stage, he's a right regular philanthropist who supports his local Brainwave charity, which is based in his home town and helps kids with cerebral palsy.

"Giving back is massively important to me. When you're in the position I'm in where your profile can really elevate some charities then you can use that to raise money and help families and kids in need. I'm in the position to do that and I love helping. I love doing that. Not that he does. When he's off duty, you're more likely to find him knocking about in Essex, where he still hangs out with his old mates. Olly may have Robbie Williams' number on speed dial, but he's just as likely to text his mates, Colin and Robbie, instead.

"I'm always at home in Essex. I'm always visiting my old employees, especially an agency I used to work for, Prime Appointments.

● **Olly is performing at The Genting Arena, Birmingham on Thursday, March 23, Friday, March 24 and Saturday, March 25. Tickets cost from £33.99. Visit www.theticketfactory.com or call 0844 33 88 222.**

Andy Richardson

Annette – no stranger to city



Billy reaches new heights



Annette is loving boinging back – to star in Billy Elliot

It'll be like a home from home when Annette McLaughlin lands in Birmingham to star in a six-week run of Billy Elliot.

The actress and comedian once spent every other weekend near the city, commuting from London with her then-boyfriend, Frank Skinner, to watch the Albion. Boing Boing, does that make her a Born Again Baggie. "Oh God, no. I was just a very, very good girlfriend."

Instead of the blue-and-white-stripes, her abiding memory is of the half time pies.

The West End star, who plays Mrs Wilkinson in Billy Elliot, the role made famous in the movie by Julie Walters, worked with

Skinner on TV's The Frank Skinner Show.

"Frank was my boyfriend and I used to go and watch West Brom with him," she says. "I enjoy football because I had three brothers and used to enjoy playing it as a kid. I used to go every Saturday with Frank and I loved it. I loved the pies most of all, that was my favourite thing. The gravy used to drip down my hands. They were delicious."

"We only used to go up for the weekend but it was great because he was such a massive fan of West Brom and was so proud of his heritage."

Heritage is a dominant theme in Billy Elliot. It celebrates life in a northern mining town. Set against the background of the 1980s miners' strike it follows Billy's journey from

boxing to ballet class, where he discovers a passion for dance that changes his life forever.

Sharing the role of Billy are Adam Abbou, Matthew Lyons, Haydn May and local boy Lewis Smallman, from West Bromwich. McLaughlin has been with the show for a year and describes it as a winner.

"Having seen it when it first opened in the West End, I just wanted to be a part of it. It's an incredible show and I wanted to play that part," she says. "When it came round it was an easy decision to make. I've been doing the show for almost a year on tour and I love every second."

The show runs at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday until April 29

It's Bach to Hendrix at Kennedy special

World-renowned violinist Nigel Kennedy will make a triumphant return to his adopted home city of Birmingham with a gala celebration show at Symphony Hall.

The maverick Aston Villa-loving violinist will combine his greatest successes and new works for this one-off performance on Saturday, March 11.

Kennedy will perform a wide-ranging repertoire from Bach to Hendrix, world music to jazz, accompanied by a host of special guests including Bulgarian composer and virtuoso on the gadulka (stringed folk instrument) Georgi Andreev and world-class violinists Jean-Luc Ponty, Michael Guttman and Pieter Daniel.

Kennedy's unique talent and extraordinary ability to communicate with audiences have

made him one of the world's most popular performers.

Jean-Luc Ponty is a master of the violin in the arena of jazz and rock. He is widely regarded as an innovator.

Despite their different musical backgrounds, Kennedy and Ponty had the same mentor – Stéphane Grappelli, who saw in them the renewal of the violin. The encounter between these two exceptional artists promises to be powerfully creative. It will range from the acoustic to the electronic and with a repertoire drawn from the last three centuries.

Georgi Andreev is a virtuoso of the gadulka, a traditional Bulgarian bowstring instrument. Michael Guttman is an eminent violin soloist, conductor and music director of festivals around the world.

At the age of 10 he became the youngest student ever to be admitted into the

Brussels Royal Conservatory of Music and went on to study at the Juilliard School in New York with Nigel.

Another of Nigel's friends from Juilliard, Pieter Daniel, who made his orchestra debut at the age of 12, will also perform.

"This is shaping up to be an amazing concert," says Nigel. "Jean-Luc Ponty, is a genius. He is one of the greatest in jazz, ever. He is an innovator with a unique visionary spin. He plays on the harmonies, just killa. Then we've got Georgi over from Bulgaria too, it'll be special."

"And, of course my good friends from Juilliard, Michael and Pieter, will be joining me too. I'll have a strong relationship with everyone on that stage."

Ticket prices range from £25.50 to £68 for the 7.30pm gala concert. See www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

Ladies – the times they are a-changin'

Menopause The Musical, an all-singing all-dancing comedy is on its way

The show about ladies of a certain age will unite one of Britain's best known singing sisters with three familiar faces from TV drama.

Maureen Nolan will join Cheryl Fergison (pictured) who played Heather Trott in EastEnders with sometime member of the Loose Women panel Rebecca Wheatley, from TV's Casualty, and Penny Dreadful actress Ruth Berkeley. It is on at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Thursday, March 9.



Gig choice? Listen to what Mama Said . . .

Mama Said and 7 Years outfit Lukas Graham, from Denmark, bring their soul-pop to Birmingham O2

Academy on Sunday and the same night Traffic co-founder Dave Mason brings his Traffic Jam to Bilston's Robin 2.

In Digbeth, Leeds indie rockers The Pigeon Detectives play the O2 Institute on Wednesday, with Lucy Spraggan on Thursday and Oxford's Glass Animals on Friday.

Leamington Spa singer-songwriter Joe Dolman (pictured) plays the Sunflower Lounge in Brum on Thursday. Dutch Uncles play the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath on Monday.



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Mon 13 Mar	5 Rhine & Moselle Inclusive	£219
Mon 13 Mar	5 Rhine Valley Superdeal	£189
Mon 20 Mar	4 Ostend Special Breakaway	£149
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Sue Perkins & Mel Giedroyc

Let's Sing and Dance for Comic Relief (BBC1, 6.45pm)
New series. Presenter double-team Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins are reunited to host the all-star talent show, in which celebrity performers take to the stage to display their musical talents by delivering their interpretations of various pop hits. The contest gets under way with performances by Radio 1 DJ Matt Edmondson, astrologer Russell Grant, comedienne Sara Pascoe, DJ duo Rickie Haywood-Williams and Melvin Odom, and Absolutely Fabulous actresses Harriet Thorpe and Helen Lederer - otherwise known as Patsy's long-suffering associates Fleur and Catriona. Only two of the star acts featured each week will be able progress to the Grand Final.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live.** **11.30 Mary Berry Everyday.** (R) **12.00 Football Focus.** **1.00 BBC News: Weather.** **1.15 Bargain Hunt.** **2.15 My Life: The Boy on the Bicycle.** **2.45 Film: Monsters vs Aliens.** (2009) Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon. **4.10 Final Score.** **5.10 Celebrity Mastermind.** (R) **5.40 BBC News.** **5.50 Regional Programme.**
6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Hugh Dennis and Pauline McLynn, Charlie Higson and Adil Ray, Richard Gibson and Vicki Michelle, and Jean Fergusson and Tina Malone compete. (R)
6.45 Let's Sing and Dance for Comic Relief. New series. Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins present the all-star talent show, in which celebrity performers display their musical talents via interpretations of various pop hits.
8.00 Who Dares Wins. Game show in which Nick Knowles challenges two pairs of complete strangers to team up, with each pair battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject. The first couple to win two rounds gets to play for £50,000 and each time the champions defeat a new set of opponents their winnings mount up.
8.40 Casualty. David spends one last day with Ollie before his aunt takes him back to Spain, while Louise and Dylan try convince the board to help them tackle alcohol abuse.
9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Rory and Dino have a bust-up. Mark and Betty announce they are leaving for Australia right away and a phone call causes the Brown children to suspect one of them may be adopted. (R)
10.00 BBC News: Weather. National Lottery Update.
10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Leicester City v Hull City at King Power Stadium, and Liverpool v Arsenal at Anfield.
11.45 This Country. Kerry becomes a door-to-door saleswoman and Kurtan makes new friends in the village. Mockumentary presenting a wry look at the lives of young people living in rural Britain.
12.10 Film: Papadopoulos & Sons. (2012) **1.55 Weather for the Week Ahead.** **2.00 BBC News.**

BBC2

6.25 Film: North West Frontier. (1959) Action adventure, starring Lauren Bacall and Kenneth More. **8.30 Live Athletics: European Indoor Championships.** Coverage of the morning session on day two. **10.00 Ireland's Wild River: The Mighty Shannon - Natural World.** (R) **11.00 Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **12.00 Two Greedy Italians: Still Hungry.** (R) **1.00 The Little Paris Kitchen: Cooking with Rachel Khoo.** (R) **1.30 Escape to the Country.** (R) **2.15 Mastermind.** (R) **3.15 University Challenge.** (R) **3.45 Only Connect.** (R) **4.15 Live Athletics: European Indoor Championships.** Gabby Logan presents coverage of the evening session on day two.
8.15 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Murton visits the three island outposts of Shetland, Papa Stour, Whalsay and Out Skerries. He encounters newborn lambs and watches a traditional sword dance, before taking a trip on a trawler. He discovers how the islands have developed their own sense of community in the face of declining populations and the challenges of a remote location.
8.45 Dad's Army. Sgt Wilson struggles to concentrate on his Home Guard duties when he has a personal problem to contend with. Classic comedy, starring John Le Mesurier and Arthur Lowe. (R)
9.15 Live at the Apollo. Adam Hills, host of Channel 4's The Last Leg, is the latest master of ceremonies at London's Hammersmith Apollo. He introduces US comic Michelle Wolf and sharp-witted Jamali Maddix to the stage. (R)
10.00 Martin Scorsese: True Confessions. Nick James interviews Academy Award-winning director Martin Scorsese on his fascination with themes of masculinity, religion, crime, and life in New York.
10.30 Film: Mean Streets. (1973) A small-time crook's conscience and loyalty to his girlfriend conflict with his desire to rise in the criminal world. Martin Scorsese's drama, with Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel.
12.20 Taboo. (R) **2.15 Film: Witchfinder General.** (1968) A 17th-century lawyer callously destroys innocent lives while serving as a witchfinder, but meets his match in a vengeful soldier. Horror, starring Vincent Price and Ian Ogilvy. **3.40 This is BBC Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **6.45 Sooty.** (R) **6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story.** (R) **7.00 Oddbods.** (R) **7.05 Thunderbirds Are Go.** (R) **7.30 Scrambled! Scrambled!** **7.35 Scrambled! Mr Bean: The Animated Series.** (R) **7.50 Scrambled! Horrid Henry.** (R) **8.10 Scrambled! Teen Titans Go!** **8.30 Scrambled! Bear Grylls Survival School.** **9.05 Scrambled! Adventure Time.** (R) **9.25 Alphabetical.** (R) **10.20 Guess This House.** (R) **11.20 ITV News: Weather.** **11.25 The Voice UK.** (R) **1.30 ITV Racing: Live from Doncaster.** Coverage of today's race meetings at Doncaster and Newbury. **4.00 You've Been Framed!** (R) **4.30 Regional Programme: Weather.** **4.45 ITV News: Weather.** **5.00 Film: Despicable Me 2.** (2013) Animated comedy sequel.
7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. The popular duo's entertainment show continues, as Robbie Williams and his wife Ayda Field join the pair for this year's first I'm A Celebrity Get Out of Me Ear. Brendan O'Carroll, otherwise known as Agnes Brown of Mrs Brown's Boys, serves as this week's guest announcer, and Stephen Mulhern takes the boys back through time to Ancient Egypt in another round of Ant Versus Dec. Plus, the next instalment of The Missing Crown Jewel, in which Emilia Fox aims to take the investigation one step closer to identifying the famous thief, and Ant and Dec themselves star in a spectacular End of the Show Show.
8.30 The Voice UK. The contest switches gear once again in the first live knock-out show, beginning as Jennifer Hudson's six acts are whittled down to three via head-to-head performances.
9.45 ITV News: Weather.
10.00 Lethal Weapon. A maverick cop is partnered with a veteran detective trying to maintain a low stress level. Action drama based on the films, starring Clayne Crawford and Damon Wayans. (R)
10.55 Film: First Blood. (1982) A Vietnam veteran escapes unjust imprisonment and flees into the wilderness, where he fights the law on his own terms. Action thriller, with Sylvester Stallone.
12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00 Who's Doing the Dishes?** (R) **3.50 ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

7.10 The King of Queens. (R) **7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.30 Frasier.** (R) **9.00 Frasier.** (R) **9.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **10.00 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **10.30 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **10.55 The Simpsons.** (R) **11.30 The Simpsons.** (R) **12.00 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast.** (R) **1.00 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **1.30 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **2.00 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **2.30 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **3.00 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **3.30 A Life in the Sun: Summer Sun.** (R) **4.35 Location, Location, Location.** (R) **5.35 Grand Designs.** (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Escape to the Chateau. Series following a British family through the process of buying and restoring a French chateau that has been empty for the past four decades. Dick Strawbridge and his partner Angel Adoree's new home has 12 acres of land, nine outbuildings, a walled garden and a moat - but it also has no electricity, heating or water, and proves to be a far more complicated DIY project than expected. (R)
8.00 Penelope Keith at Her Majesty's Service. The actress travels around the country to visit the Queen's official residences and meet people with royal appointments. The journey begins in Windsor Castle, where she finds out about Britain's oldest order of chivalry, meets the Royal Herb Strewer and unearths a box of treasure dating back to Elizabeth I. She also takes a trip up the Thames in the glided barge Gloriana. (R)
9.00 Film: The Wolverine. (2013) The former member of the X-Men is lured out of hiding and travels to Japan, where a dying businessman offers him the chance to give up his immortality for a normal life. He ends up robbed of his superhuman powers by a mysterious scientist and is forced to protect the tycoon's granddaughter from a secret conspiracy's assassins. Superhero adventure spin-off, starring Hugh Jackman and Tao Okamoto.
11.25 Film: Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter. (2012)
1.20 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.10 Hollyoaks.** **4.25 Building the Dream.** **5.20 Fifteen to One.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.55 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** (R) **10.30 Access.** **10.35 Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole.** (R) **11.35 Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole.** (R) **12.35 Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole.** (R) **1.30 Dance Moms.** **2.25 Dance Moms.** **3.20 Dance Moms.** **4.15 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door.** (R) **5.15 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.**
6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Documentary series giving an insight into the world of debt collection. Kevin Stokes and Brian O'Shaughnessy try to collect a debt from a technology company, but with the director nowhere to be seen, the office manager does everything she can to prove the business is no longer trading. Stewart McCracken and Elmo Victor face a heart-breaking house repossession in Merseyside, where two landlords are forced to evict a tenant recovering from a brain tumour which has cost him his job and income.
7.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. Neil goes undercover at the Department of Defence after a researcher is found dead, and a new addition fails to endear himself to the rest of the team.
8.00 NCIS. A petty officer is suspected of murdering his ex-girlfriend, and volunteers to be court-martialled so that the NCIS team will investigate and perhaps prove his innocence.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Highlights from the weekend's games, including Huddersfield Town v Newcastle United at John Smith's Stadium, Blackburn Rovers v Wigan Athletic at Ewood Park, and Fulham v Preston North End at Craven Cottage.
10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. All the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Rochdale v Sheffield United, and Plymouth Argyle v Carlisle United.
10.30 Conspiracy: Pearl Harbor Cover-up. Suggestions of a cover-up in relation to the Japanese attack in December 1941, alleging it was actually masterminded by US president Franklin D Roosevelt.
11.30 Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **12.00 SuperCasino.** **3.10 Inside Windsor Castle.** (R) **4.00 The Cars That Made Britain Great.** (R) **4.50 House Doctor.** (R) **5.15 Wildlife SOS.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Indian Hill Railways. **8.00 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens.** **9.00 Follow the Money.** **11.00 Top of the Pops: 1983** **12.05 The Secret Science of Pop.** **1.05 Film: Janis: Little Girl Blue** (2015) **2.35 Queens of Soul.** **3.35 Close**
ITV2
1.10 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. **12.40 Take Me Out.** **1.55 The Voice UK.** **3.55 Film: Paul Blart: Mall Cop** (2009) **4.55 FYI Daily.** **5.00 Film: Paul Blart: Mall Cop** (2009) **5.45 Film: Kindergarten Cop** (1990) **6.45 FYI Daily.** **6.50 Film: Kindergarten Cop** (1990) **8.00 Scorpion.** **9.00 Film: American Pie 2** (2001) **10.05 FYI Daily.** **10.10 Film: American Pie 2** (2001) **11.10 Family Guy.** **12.35 American Dad!** **1.05 Film: Wanted** (2008) **2.05 FYI Daily.** **2.10 Film: Wanted** (2008) **3.00 Teleshopping**
ITV3
11.35 Lewis. **1.40 Inspector Morse.** **3.55 Agatha Christie's Marple.** **6.00 Rosemary & Thyme.** **7.00 Midsomer Murders.** **11.00 Carry On Forever.** **12.00 Wycliffe.** **1.05 Marchlands.** **2.00 ITV3 Nightscreen.** **2.30 Teleshopping**
ITV4
11.00 The Car Chasers. **12.00 Storage Wars: Texas.** **12.40 Live Darts: UK Open.** Coverage of the second day at the Butlins Minehead Resort. **5.00 The Darts Show.** **5.25 Pawn Stars.** **5.55 It's Not Rocket Science.** **7.00 Live Darts: UK Open.** Further coverage of the second day at the Butlins Minehead Resort. **11.00 Film: Jackie Brown** (1997) **12.00 FYI Daily.** **12.05 Film: Jackie Brown** (1997) **2.05 Minder.** **3.00 Teleshopping**
E4
11.00 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts. **11.15 Film: Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel** (2009) **1.00 The Goldbergs.** **2.30 Black-ish.** **3.00 The Big Bang Theory.** **5.00 Film: Mission: Impossible** (1996) **7.10 The Big Bang Theory.** **9.00 Film: Red** (2010) **11.10 Gogglebox.** **12.15 Celebs Go Dating.** **3.20 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD.** **4.05 Rude Tube.** **4.30 Rude(ish) Tube.** **4.50 Revenge**
Film4
11.00 Mr Popper's Penguins (2011) **1.00 The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader** (2010) **3.10 Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World** (2011) **4.55 Casper** (1995) **6.55 X-Men** (2000) Sci-fi comic-book adventure, starring Hugh Jackman. **9.00 The Rewrite** (2014) Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant and Marisa Tomei. **11.10 Stonehearst Asylum** (2014) **1.25 Sorority Row** (2009) **3.35 Close**

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CHOICE



Robot Wars (BBC2, 7pm)
New series. Dara Ó Briain and Angela Scanlon present the first group heat, with eight teams facing off through two group battles in the arena for a place in the grand final. A new twist on the format sees random house robots being sent to attack the competitors if they stray into the wrong part of the arena. Jonathan Pearce commentates on the action, while Professor Noel Sharkey, Dr Lucy Rogers and Professor Sethu Vijayakumar judge the operators' skills and select a victor in the case of an uncertain outcome.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Flog It! (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Shop Well for Less? (R) **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.
6.00 **The Big Painting Challenge.** Mariella Frostrup and Richard Coles present the show from the National Portrait Gallery, where the artists face two of their hardest challenges. Firstly, they have to produce a self-portrait, most of which seem to capture the subject looking afraid. They are then joined by sitters Angela Rippon and Floella Benjamin and challenged to capture their famous faces accurately on canvas.
7.00 **Countryside.** The team explores the South Downs. Helen Skelton discovers why dark skies are important for animals. John Craven visits the Bloomsbury Group's rural retreat, and Matt Baker meets a pony that is blazing a trail across the landscape. Tom Heap travels to Spain to get to the bottom of Britain's vegetable crisis, and Adam Henson investigates new ways to stop cattle from roaming.
8.00 **Call the Midwife.** Dr Turner helps a couple whose daughter was born without limbs to have her fitted for prosthetics – but the experience provokes different reactions from her mother and father.
9.00 **SS-GB.** Archer tracks down Spode, who confesses to murdering his brother, before going in search of the missing atomic bomb plans – but the resistance are still targeting him.
10.00 **BBC News.**
10.20 **Regional Programme.**
10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, which featured Tottenham Hotspur v Everton at White Hart Lane, and Sunderland v Manchester City at The Stadium of Light.
11.35 **American High School.** A student whose father is in prison has developed his own business.
12.20 **The Celebrity Apprentice USA.**
1.45 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.15** An Island Parish. (R) **7.45** Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **8.45** Countryside. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day. (R) **11.45** Nipalissima. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra.
1.00 **Triathlon.** **2.30** **Live Athletics:** European Indoor Championships. Gabby Logan presents coverage of the third and final day from the Kombank Arena in Belgrade, Serbia, where medals are awarded in 11 events. The finals of the women's and men's 800m, 3,000m and 4x400m relay will all take place on this concluding day, in addition to the women's 60m and long jump, plus the men's high jump and triple jump, and the conclusion of the heptathlon. With commentary and analysis from Steve Backley, Steve Cram, Colin Jackson, Denise Lewis and Paula Radcliffe.
7.00 **Robot Wars.** New series. Dara Ó Briain and Angela Scanlon present the first group heat, with eight teams battling it out for a place in the grand final. With commentary by Jonathan Pearce.
8.00 **Top Gear.** New series. Another helping of four-wheel features, including test drives and reports on the latest models, plus a celebrity taking to the show's test track in Star in a Reasonably Priced Car.
9.00 **Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week.** The seven remaining contestants arrive in Australia for the final challenge, where they undergo training with the Special Air Service Regiment – but must first undergo a gruelling exercise to see if they are physically prepared for what is to come. Those that make it through this stage face tactical interrogation and an endurance race wearing weighted rucksacks. Last in the series.
10.00 **Film: London Road.** (2015) Premiere. Ipswich residents' real accounts of a series of murders committed in their neighbourhood are presented in song. Fact-based musical, starring Olivia Colman and Tom Hardy.
11.30 **Film: Papillon.** (1973) A Frenchman imprisoned for life on Devil's Island for a crime he did not commit makes a desperate bid for freedom. Fact-based drama, starring Steve McQueen.
1.55 Taboo. (R) **2.55** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.55** Holby City. (R) **4.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **8.20** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Teen Titans Go! (R) **9.05** Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **10.55** Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.25** Chopping Block. (R) **12.25** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **1.30** ITV News: Weather. **1.35** The Voice UK. (R) **2.50** Little Big Shots. (R) **3.50** The Chase. (R) **4.50** Tipping Point. (R) **5.50** Regional Programme: Weather.
6.00 **ITV News: Weather.**
6.15 **Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule.** Madcap panel show presented by the comedian, who presides over two teams nominally tasked with saving the planet from any potential alien invasion. (R)
6.40 **Five Gold Rings.** New series. Game show, hosted by Phillip Schofield, in which contestants compete to identify images on an LED floor while viewers can play along using the series app.
7.45 **The Voice UK.** The second live knockout show, which sees three of Tom Jones' acts eliminated, while the others go through to a place in the quarter final. Jennifer Hudson performs in the studio.
9.00 **The Good Karma Hospital.** Lydia and Ruby visit a convent to make a seemingly miraculous diagnosis, but the treatment of a young nun and the senior doctor's interfering attitude creates tension between them.
10.00 **ITV News: Weather.**
10.20 **The Nightly Show Best Bits.** New series. Highlights from the previous week.
10.50 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston. (R)
11.50 **Premiership Rugby Union.** Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the 17th round of fixtures, including Leicester Tigers v Exeter Chiefs, Bath v Wasps, and Newcastle Falcons v Saracens.
12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** Chopping Block. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **3.00** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.00** Channel 4 News. **4.30** Film: Fantastic Four. (2005) Sci-fi comic-book adventure, starring Ioan Gruffudd.
6.30 **The Jump.** The remaining contestants compete for a place in the final, battling it out in the air jump, an event that requires them to gain the most height during a ski jump. They then move on to the Giant Slalom – the fastest event in the competition, on a much longer and steeper course than previous slalom events. Presented by Davina McCall.
8.00 **Rivers with Jeremy Paxman.** The presenter explores the Severn, Britain's longest river, which flows through both England and Wales. Along the way, he explores the largest ship graveyard in the country, meets the last practitioners of an unusual form of fishing, and takes part in a coracle regatta. He finally reaches the source of the river, where he meets a local poet.
9.00 **Homeland.** Carrie follows a lead, Saul meets an old friend, and Keane takes a stand. Starring Claire Danes, Rupert Friend and Mandy Patinkin.
10.00 **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.00 **Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown.** Jimmy Carr hosts the words-and-numbers quiz as Sean Lock and Henning Wehn compete against Jon Richardson and Victoria Coren Mitchell. (R)
12.00 **Film: Broken City.** (2013) A New York private eye hired to find out if the mayor's wife is having an affair discovers a web of political corruption. Crime thriller, with Mark Wahlberg and Russell Crowe. **2.00** The Last Leg. With Rob Delaney and Sharon Horgan. (R) **2.55** Under Lock and Key. The stories of families whose loved ones are locked away in hospitals. (R) **3.50** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. A pink property in Southend-on-Sea. (R) **4.45** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.15** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Fireman Sam. (R) **6.55** Rupert Bear. (R) **7.05** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **7.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **7.25** Little Princess. (R) **7.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.20** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.50** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.25** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.20** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.50** Film: The Fifth Element. (1997) **2.10** Film: Spies Like Us. (1985) **4.10** Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh. (R) **5.10** Cruising with Jane McDonald. (R)
6.05 **Inside Windsor Castle.** Documentary marking the centenary of the Windsor dynasty by examining the history of the royal residence over the past 80 years, beginning with the fire of 1992. (R)
7.00 **Inside Windsor Castle.** A look back at the series of events that shaped the monarchy between 1936 and 1952, using dramatic reconstructions and an extraordinary archive of film. (R)
8.00 **Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords.** New series. Cases include a woman with rental arrears of almost £3,000 after renting a house out, and a team investigates poor living conditions above a Birmingham shop.
8.55 **5 News Weekend.**
9.00 **The Bruce Forsyth Story: From the Palladium to the Palace.** New series. A look back at the entertainer's 75 years in showbiz, featuring candid interviews with Forsyth and contributions from biographers, colleagues and famous fans.
10.30 **An Audience with Bruce Forsyth.** The versatile veteran entertainer reveals his many talents in a feast of song and dance before a VIP audience, who quiz him about his remarkable career. (R)
11.35 **Bruce Forsyth's Comedy Heroes.** The entertainer discusses his favourite comics. (R)
12.35 Peter Kay: The Early Years. (R) **12.55** SuperCasino. **3.10** Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh. (R) **4.00** When Kids Kill: Catfish Killer. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Sound of Song **8.00** Kiri Te Kanawa at the BBC **9.00** Film: The Hunt (2012) **10.50** Sound Waves: The Symphony of Physics **11.50** Every Breath We Take: Understanding Our Atmosphere **12.50** Timeshift: Hurricanes and Heatwaves – The Highs and Lows of British Weather **1.45** Mumbai High: The Musical **2.50** Kiri Te Kanawa at the BBC **3.50** Close
ITV2
11.45 The Voice UK **1.00** 2Awesome: 2Awesome **1.05** 2Awesome: Guideance **1.40** 2Awesome: Fame High **2.05** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **2.30** 2Awesome: LA Story **2.50** You've Been Framed! Gold: Top 100 Holidays **3.50** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **5.25** Film: King Kong (2005) **6.25** FYI Daily **6.30** Film: King Kong (2005) **9.00** Ibiza Weekend **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** The Cleveland Show **1.25** Ibiza Weekend **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.45 Film: The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) **1.45** FYI Daily **1.50** Film: The Belles of St Trinian's (1954) **2.35** Inspector Morse **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.55** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Carry On Forever **11.05** Film: Carry On Camping (1969) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10** Film: Carry On Camping (1969) **12.55** Inspector Morse **2.45** Wycliffe **3.40** May the Best House Win **5.25** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
12.45 Live Darts: UK Open. The quarter-finals at the Butlins Minehead Resort. **5.00** Pawn Stars **5.55** Fishing Impossible **7.00** Live Darts: UK Open. The semi-finals and final at the Butlins Minehead Resort. **11.00** Film: Born to Raise Hell (2010) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05** Film: Born to Raise Hell (2010) **12.55** The Football Mavericks **1.55** I Want That Car **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
ITV4
12.00 The Jump **1.40** Film: Step Up (2006) **3.40** The Goldbergs **5.05** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** Film: Unstoppable (2010) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Film: The Grey (2011) **12.15** Celebs Go Dating **2.20** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.05** Gap Year **3.55** Hollywood
11.00 The First Film (2015) **1.25** Hugo (2011) **3.50** Carry On Behind (1975) **5.35** Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) **7.15** Johnny English (2003) **9.00** Mr Turner (2014) **11.55** Cheap Thrills (2013) **1.40** Wrong Turn at Tahoe (2009) **3.30** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra, Channel 5, 11.05pm
When a powerful experimental weapon is snatched by a mysterious terrorist organisation, two of the soldiers guarding it are recruited into a top-secret military strike force. As they go in search of the stolen technology, they uncover a plot by its creator to take over the world. Action adventure, with Channing Tatum and Sienna Miller. (2009)

TUESDAY
Deadly Pursuit, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An Alaskan wilderness guide visits a friend in LA, where he meets and falls in love with a well-off city girl. She clearly feels the same because when he returns home, she decides to follow him – only to come up against his ex-girlfriend and a sinister drug operation. Romantic thriller, starring KC Clyde. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
Two Wrongs, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Nurse and single mother Sarah struggles to balance her work and home life, but her worst nightmare is realised when her daughter Lauren is abducted while walking home alone from school and she faces a moral dilemma if she is to save her child. Thriller, starring Gillian Zinser. (2015)



Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, Friday, BBC1, 10.35pm

THURSDAY
Perfect Life, Perfect Lies, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Four young women meet up at a school reunion, where they unearth a time capsule in which they buried their deepest, darkest secrets. Inside the box is a revelation that unlocks the mystery of a tragic death 10 years earlier. Thriller, starring Kacey Clarke. (2016)

FRIDAY
Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, BBC1, 10.35pm
A buccaneer and a blacksmith commandeer a British ship and set sail in pursuit of a pirate captain who has kidnapped a colonial governor's daughter. However, their quarry and his crew are under a curse that turns them into living skeletons – and makes them impossible to kill. Swashbuckling fantasy adventure, starring Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley and Geoffrey Rush. (2003)

Harry's new series is out of this world

Only a fevered imagination such as that belonging to Harry Hill could come up with the format of this extraordinary show.

Each week, two teams of celebrity guests are presented with an unusual task – to find a way of saving Earth from invasion and possible destruction by rogue aliens.

Often, when such a threat is depicted in a science fiction TV show or film, the extra-terrestrials seem to think they can take over the planet because humans are either a pushover or not worthy of their consideration – Hill wants to prove we're neither of those things by finding items that prove we are all good fun and therefore should be saved.

Along the way there are lots of gags, sketches and special guests who look on as amusing items are put forward for Hill's perusal – he ultimately decides what should be included in the Fun Capsule, and the more a team manages to have submitted, the more likely they are to win the game.

"It's great to be back on ITV with an all new format that finally tackles the problem of an imminent and prolonged war with space aliens, by proving to them that us humans are really a lot of fun to hang out with!" grins the comedian.

The channel's comedy commissioning editor Saskia Schuster adds: "We're really excited to have Harry back on ITV, and we're confident that the human race will be safe in his hands with this brand new panel show packed with laughs, silliness and of course, fun."

The keyword when it comes to this series is certainly 'silly', but while some may think it's a derogatory term, it's actually used in its most positive sense here.

The world is a dark and scary place at the moment, and sometimes being able to forget our woes by just being plain daft is a wonderful thing, so Hill should carry on the good work as long as is humanly possible!

Last week's opening edition was both bonkers and hilarious in equal

measure, and there's no reason to think that this one won't be either. If anything, this week's promises to be even better thanks to an appearance by Kathy Burke; she rarely pops up on TV these days, so when she does, you know it's for something both close to her heart and worth tuning in for.

Although she has appeared in many dramatic roles, Burke remains best known for her comedy appearances alongside Harry Enfield, as well as Absolutely Fabulous, Gimme Gimme Gimme and Walking and Talking, a sitcom based on her own teenage experiences.

It's quite a coup to have tempted Burke back to TV – we suspect she may be a fan of Hill's and so keen to work with him.

She will be joined on the show by celebrity chef and TV personality Ainsley Harriott (will Percy Pepper and Susie Salt make it into the capsule? Stranger things have happened), comedian Joe Lycett and morning talk show host Lorraine Kelly.



Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule, Thursday, ITV, 8.30pm

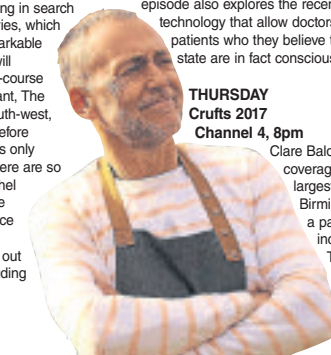
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Mutiny Channel 4, 9pm
New series. Nine men recreate a voyage by William Bligh in 1789, when he and his loyal crewmen crossed 4,000 miles of the Pacific Ocean from Tonga to Timor after being cast adrift from HMS Bounty by mutinying seamen and left for dead. SAS: Who Dares Wins chief instructor Anthony Middleton is in charge of a crew of eight made up of sailors and complete novices, attempting the journey in a replica 23ft open wooden boat, with similar equipment and the same rations of food and water that Bligh's men had. Continues tomorrow.

TUESDAY
The Secret Life of the Zoo Channel 4, 8pm
At Chester Zoo, Rothschild giraffe Tula is a week overdue after a 13-month pregnancy. But keepers are anxious that history could repeat itself – she gave birth to a stillborn calf last year. Cameras also follow this year's brood of penguin chicks. They are about to face the ordeal of joining the main pool, where they must compete for fish with the adult penguins. And baby silver gibbon Eko learns how to swing between ropes - 50 feet up. All the keepers can do is watch anxiously from below.

WEDNESDAY
Hidden Restaurants with Michel Roux Jr Channel 4, 8pm
It seems that for some chefs it's not quite enough to serve up new and unusual dishes – they want their restaurants to be out of the ordinary as well. In this new series, Michel Roux Jr is going in search of some of Britain's 'esoteric' eateries, which are hidden within some truly remarkable locations. He's hoping the visits will inspire him as he creates a three-course menu for his own hidden restaurant, The Oast House. He begins in the south-west, where he ventures into a forest before checking out a floating café that is only accessible by boat. It turns out there are so many of these hidden gems, Michel needs help finding them all, so he also recruits Freddy Bird, who once transformed a dilapidated lido in Bristol into a restaurant, to check out some other unlikely venues, including a Latin American 'bustaurant'.

The House That £100K Built BBC2, 8pm
Surgeon Gabriel Weston investigates the most complex



Hidden Restaurants with Michel Roux Jr, Wednesday, Channel 4, 8pm

and mysterious part of the human body, the brain, meeting with extraordinary people with seemingly superhuman abilities. Dr Weston meets Derek, a man who was suddenly able to play piano after a head injury, and Paul, who has a hereditary genetic condition which means he can't feel pain. This episode also explores the recent developments in technology that allow doctors to identify if patients who they believe to be in a vegetative state are in fact conscious and aware.

THURSDAY
Crufts 2017 Channel 4, 8pm
Clare Balding presents further coverage from the world's largest dog show at Birmingham NEC, where a packed programme includes judging of the Terrier and Hound groups and highlights of the Agility and Flyball. Clare also meets last year's Crufts winner Devon, who is

competing in the Eukanuba World Challenge – a league of nations-style competition for top winners from different countries. Kate Beavan and Nim Patel team up to talk about dog health and welfare, Iwan Thomas reports on dog socialisation, and there's an appearance from cat-detection dog Molly.

FRIDAY
The Gadget Show Channel 5, 7pm
Actor, presenter, voiceover man, comedian, DJ, poet and jungle inhabitant – is there anything Craig Charles cannot turn his hand to? For the next 12 weeks Charles will anchor the revamped Gadget Show from its new studio base in Birmingham. Tonight, the show's other new host, tech journalist Georgie Barrat, kicks off a series-long challenge in which she endeavours to see if gadgets can improve the performance of Monkey Tree FC – an amateur football team hovering near the bottom of Division Two of the East Midlands Public Authorities League. Jon Bentley finds out how snappy Samsung's new 360 camera is by testing it out at a 'wall of death', filming motorcycles whizzing round a circular vertical wall at 40mph. Finally, Craig inboxes a brand-new Nintendo Switch, the much-hyped new games console, just one week after its worldwide launch.

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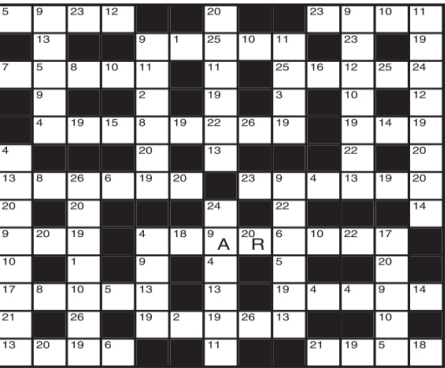
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BRAIN GYM No.418

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

Z	Q	R	O	E	B	V	T	C	I	L	W	Y	J
K	P	S	F	G	D	M	N	X	H	A	U		

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20 R
8	21
9	22 A
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

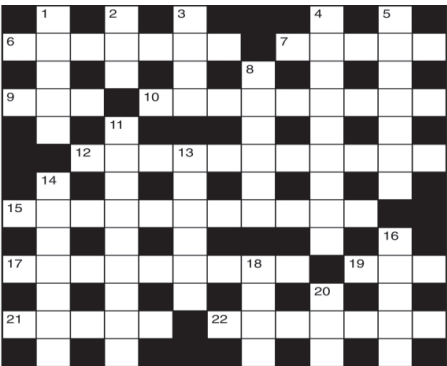
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Sole reinforcement (7)
- Fish appears to be off! (5)
- Animal found in decreasing numbers (3)
- Holder of the post (6,3)
- He tries to prevent ill-feeling among the crew (5,6)
- Injury for which there is no earthly cure (6,5)
- Eats in bar, perhaps, but he won't drink in one (9)
- Howl for a type of rum (3)
- Silly Annie gets confused (5)
- Go ahead and give someone money (7)

Down

- Certain to jump (5)
- Close finish (3)
- Asbestos should contain it (4)
- They're a blend of the main races (9)
- Its strength can be shown by proof (7)
- The artist's sitting room (6)
- It may give an edge to the news, possibly (9)
- Wan friend takes cover (6)
- Get together - for getting in the harvest (7)
- Game that may come alight? (5)
- A boy naturally opposed to the current trend (4)
- He's had plenty of time to insulate the boiler (3)



Quick Clues:

Across

- Income (7)
- Advance (3,2)
- Purchase (3)
- Solemnize (9)
- Association (11)
- Calligraphy (11)
- Dilatory one (9)
- Attempt (3)
- Haste (5)
- Seer (7)

Down

- Confute (5)
- Acquire (3)
- Heal (4)
- Stand for (9)
- Include (7)
- Vanquish (6)
- Made by hand (9)
- Numbness (6)
- Unfeeling (7)
- Hail (5)
- Trouble (4)
- Fitting (3)

Sudoku

6			9		4	3		
5				6	3		7	
					2	9		
	5	6					8	4
4	3			9				5
	7	2			6	1		
		8	2					
		9	4		8			1

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

2	5	7	3	1	6	9	4
6	4	9	5	7	2	3	1
8	1	3	4	6	9	7	2
5	3	8	9	2	6	4	7
7	9	1	8	3	4	2	5
4	2	6	1	5	7	9	8
3	7	2	6	8	5	1	4
9	6	5	2	4	1	8	3
1	8	4	7	9	3	5	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Made to measure; 8 Interred; 9 Item; 10 Chill; 12 Latest; 14 Spiced; 16 Mishap; 18 Odes; 20 Comedian; 22 Get on together. Down: 1 Pawn shop; 2 Reveal; 3 Four; 4 Pendulum; 5 Assist; 6 Free; 11 Indicate; 13 Seafarer; 15 Custom; 17 Sedate; 19 Diet; 21 Mail.
QUICK - Across: 7 Temperamental; 8 Funereal; 9 Role; 10 Barrel; 12 Cleave; 14 Lessen; 16 Tubing; 18 Pair; 20 Timorous; 22 Supplementary. Down: 1 Regulate; 2 Appear; 3 Urge; 4 Implicit; 5 Untrue; 6 Wall; 11 Lengthen; 13 Vanguard; 15 Stripe; 17 Berate; 19 Abut; 21 Meek.

Quiz

- From which post did John Profumo resign in 1963?
- Who wrote the allegory The Pilgrim's Progress?
- In which country are the Pampas Plains?
- Which bird is called the chickadee in America?
- Of what is agaric a type?
- By what name do we know Michel de Nostredame?
- What is a quebracho?
- Which sport contests the Pilkington Cup?
- Which prominent politician was in the band Ugly Rumours in the 70s?
- What type of bird is a condor?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Inuits; 2 Sir Anthony Hopkins; 3 USA and Great Britain; 4 Click beetle; 5 Puma; 6 George Foreman; 7 Canada; 8 Franklin D Roosevelt; 9 Italy; 10 Anatoly Karpov.
Niner: DOVETAILS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

6347 gives a bird,
9728 gives a second bird,
651172 gives a third bird.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

New look at British Queen, but same brilliant service

Commercial feature

What are you looking for in a proper local? Could it be quality beer, at the some of the lowest prices in the area, combined with friendly, attentive service? Well look no further than the British Queen in Birmingham Road, Oldbury.

Newly-refurbished and with an outside play area in the very attractive beer garden – which includes a smoking area – the British Queen has become a favourite haunt for many people who like a nice pint as well as top pub cuisine.

With draught and bottled beer, cider, wines and spirits on offer as well as tea or coffee, there is plenty to accommodate every drinker's taste.

Atmosphere

Among the British Queen's menu masterpieces are the very popular barbecue sizzlers and curries, sea food and vegetarian meals, to eat in, or even take away, if customers need to get back home.

And the friendly atmosphere inside means that there is a warm welcome for all, with live football matches screened to tempt fans of the beautiful game, both on Sky Sports and BT Sports, not to mention cricket, rugby, darts or snooker, depending on what is on at the time.

There is a pool table and jukebox to provide further entertainment and our chefs are professional, with extensive experience in the trade.

In fact all the staff are intent on maintaining the Queen's fine



The revamped beer garden, complete with play equipment and smoking area



The refurbished interior of the pub



Some of the fine cuisine available

So for nice, clean seating inside and out, a friendly atmosphere, some of the best beer, quality food and service, why not try living it up in right royal style at the British Queen?

The British Queen
Sports Bar & Restaurant

Opening Hours - Monday - Thursday 4pm - 11pm
Friday - Sunday 12pm - Late

• Beer Garden • Smoking Area • Children's Play Area

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Function Room Available to seat 40 people

04.03.17
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Follow us on Facebook @BritishQueenKitchen
133 Birmingham Road, Oldbury
Telephone: 07743 933112/ 0121 544 7792

The Ticket

Make a night of it

Olly's at the Genting on Thursday, March 23 and our hearts are skipping a beat at the very thought of it. The Ticket's here to help you enjoy your date with the Troublemaker giving you the lowdown on all the best places to be. . .

A real Gent – where would Olly go before a big night out?



EAT UP



Simple supper or fancy food, whatever tickles your tastebuds there's a dining destination to be found at Resorts World. But where would Olly go? We reckon he'd be up for a quick bite at TGI Friday's, with its American inspired fodder, it's grilling stuff. Think Chicken wings, Cajun shrimp, Jack Daniel's sesame mushroom strips and pulled pork sundae washed down with a bottle of Bud.

IN THE DRINK



There's no point waiting around feeling at a loose end before it's show time, Olly's a cheeky chappy and he's sure to be first up for a bevvie or two.

Head to the The World Bar where there are more than 40 craft beers on offer from ales and stouts to lagers and even beer cocktails.

Fancy a Jewellery Porter with a complex taste of coffee, chocolate and toffee with a delightful array of subtle fruit notes?

Yes please, we'll drink to that.

PILLOW TALK



LUXURY LAYOVER

Splash out and make a night of it and stay at the recently opened Genting Hotel right on site. Prices start from £97 to £297 so it's up to you if you go a little crazy on a room or completely wild in a snazzy suite. With bars, restaurant and a spa you could even make a weekend of it. If it's a night with the girls, enjoy some treatments and make yourself beautiful before you see Olly in action and then dream about him later as you slumber in style.

CHEAP SLEEPS

If you're strapped for cash then save your pennies by catching your zzzs at the Premier Inn which is a 25-minute walk away from the Genting. From only £35 a night it won't stretch your budget leaving you some spare cash for drinks and if you're a really big fan, any Olly merch from the gig. If he spots you in an I 'heart' Olly T-shirt he may well ask: "Dance With Me Tonight!"

TRAVEL LIGHT

WHERE TO PARK

Driving to the gig? Then there's loads of space to park right by the arena. Even better, if you pre-pay, you can avoid the queues at the payment kiosk and get to your seat a little bit quicker. No chance of you missing the support act either.

ON TRACK

If you fancy a few drinks or don't want to be stuck in traffic jams before or after the gig, then there's no need to drive. Trains run direct to Birmingham NEC from across the region making it easy peasy to get there on time.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO HOME
BUYING AND
LETTING

31
Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, March 2, 2017

Modern well presented second floor apartment

A modern well-presented second floor apartment, 46 Wellspring Gardens in Dudley lies close to town with access to surrounding centres and Merry Hill.

It is for sale through Wakeman at £89,950 with no upward chain.

The property has deceptively spacious accommodation with uPVC sealed unit double glazing and gas fired central heating.

The apartment is secure and low maintenance and would be ideal for a first-time buyer or an investor, said a spokesman for the selling agent.

The accommodation – with a telephone entry system – comprises an entrance hall with a radiator, entry phone and a built-in cupboard off and a lounge with a radiator, a window and a French window opening to a Juliette balcony.

The kitchen area has a stainless steel single drainer inset sink top, base cupboards with a skirting fan heater, wall cupboards, a drawer unit, work surfaces, an Electrolux electric oven and gas hob with extractor hood over, an integrated AEG fridge and freezer, a Zanussi dishwasher and Zanussi automatic washer/dryer and a window.

Bedroom one faces the front of the development. It has a radiator, a built-in mirror door wardrobe and window. Bedroom two also lies at the front of the apartment's layout, having a radiator and a window.

The bathroom has a panelled bath with a shower over and a shower screen, a pedestal wash hand basin, low level WC, radiator, extractor fan and part-tiled walls.

Outside, there is communal access to the flat with a mail box, communal bin store and an allocated parking space.

If you are thinking of selling your home, then Wakeman Chartered Surveyors and Estate Agents in Dudley offer a free market appraisal, in order to give you advice on the marketing and asking price for your home.

All viewings are arranged through their offices and they make every endeavour to obtain viewing feedback and report this to you.

DUDLEY £89,950



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Wakeman

TEL: 01384 459999

EMAIL: dudley@wakeman-online.com

KEY FEATURES

Modern 2nd floor apartment

Deceptively spacious

2 bedrooms

Kitchen & bin store

Allocated parking



He's sold

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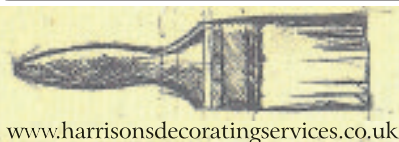
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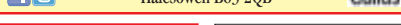
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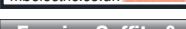
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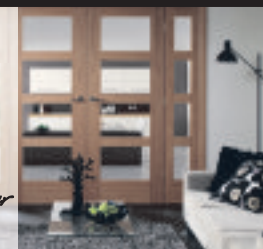
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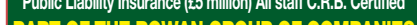
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Local Specialists



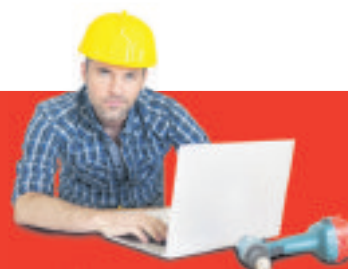
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 All types of General Repairs to your home and garden
 Also interior and exterior decorating
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1

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2

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3

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1 Family

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tioned lifts from £799. New avail-
able. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

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35 x 12, 2-bed, on 11 month
park, with club house in
Stourport-on-Severn.
£5,850
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or
07810 044813

LUNA CLUBMAN 2010 Great condi-
tion, fixed bed, end bathroom,
central heating, fridge, microwave,
digital TV. £11,000. 07921 287613.



LUNAR 462

1998, two berth, model LX2000
with Powertouch Mover, plus
Toursure Porch Awning. Ready
to go. Serviced June 2016.

£2,200

Phone 01902 893055.

STATIC CARAVAN HR74PN.
Immaculate 2 bed holiday home on
12 months park with stunning
views. £5,995 ono. 07751 735296.

V.V. TRANSPORTER
CAMPERVAN X 82 4-BERTH
MoT. Last of the air cooled. 2.0.
Cooker. Fridge. Pop up roof.
Needs TLC.
£1,750.
07724 346850.

caravans wanted

**WANTED
ALL CARAVANS**
Any age or condition
Also motorhomes wanted.
TOP PRICES PAID
Immediate collection.
CALL THOMAS
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anything considered. New or Old
01902 754011 or 07931 568716

holidays

caravan parks

LUXURY HOLIDAY HOME for Sale
on 5th Park, DG, CH, bar & restau-
rant. Child & pet friendly. 23 acres
walking woodland £24,995 inc
2017 site fees Call 01568 708 326.

what's on

markets

BESCOT
SUNDAY MARKET
OPEN EVERY SUNDAY
Banks' Stadium, Walsall FC
WS1 4SA, FREE PARKING, J9 M6
07889 975011 All hard standing

3 Home & Services

furniture

OVAL ITALIAN dining table, 6
chairs, 2 are cavers, £100. 01902
721494 after 6pm.

in your garden

DOG KENNEL and run, 5 months
old, 6ft high x 6ft deep, x 4ft wide,
£200 ono. Buyer to dismantle and
collect. 0121 520 7125.

WESTWOOD S13 petrol ride on
lawn mower, 30" cut with roller and
collector brush, cost £1500 will
accept £450 ono. 07959 608539.

items for sale

HAVE YOU CHECKED your adver-
tisement today? We would respect-
fully remind advertisers that it is
their responsibility to inform the
publishers of any mistakes or in-
accuracies on the first day of publica-
tion.

items wanted

ALL GOLD 9CT £300 PER OUNCE
CASH PAID TODAY
No amount is too small
A GENUINE LADY BUYER
All Beswick • Doulton • Worcester Moorcroft
• Electro • Old coins
• WATCHES • COSTUME JEWELLERY
• Diamonds and Gold Coins • Clocks • Paintings
• ALL SILVER • All Oriental Items
Pre-47 silver coins All war medals etc
ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

READERS ARE ADVISED to care-
fully consider all of their options
before agreeing to the sale of any of
their items.

SPECTRUM GAMES Wanted, plus
any Spectrum 128k +2 computer
wanted also any old Crash maga-
zines wanted. 01902 829918.

A BEST CASH PRICE

**FOR ALL RAILWAY
COLLECTIONS**
Any gauge or age
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Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/
any live steam. Also Die Cast,
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thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com



t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST
Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc.
CCTV cameras supplied & fitted.
Any area. Free Estimates. 7 days.
Digital aerials, Sky installation. Wall
mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.



**"TV Link are really
pleased with their
response from
their Classified
Campaign"**

Bill - TV Link

For great business
results call
01902 319 191

Classified Ads
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specialists at your service

aerials

**CLASSIFIEDS
DELIVERS
RESULTS**



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with the response
I get from my
Classified
Advertising
Contract"**

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business
results call
01902 319 191

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AERIALS**
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AERIALS FITTED FROM £75
Work Guaranteed
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01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857
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alarms/security

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ALARMS**
Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
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All quotes beaten!
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Over 35 years experience in the industry
All aspects of building work including:
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Discounts offered.
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WOOD FLOORING** @ low prices.
Call Arnold Laver 0121 533 5428.

carpentry & joinery

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0121 5322672 or 07958 552625.

fencing

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SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts,
gravel boards. **£695**
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
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gardening services

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gas fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone
carrying out any Gas work
is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas
Safety (Installation and Use)
Regulations 1998 to carry out
gas work in the UK without
being on the Gas Safe Register.

plastering

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ments. Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

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12 years experience
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS
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repairs, fascias and gutters. Call
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skip hire



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our Classified
advertising in the
Express & Star we
are really busy!"**

**It definitely
works for us!"**

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results call
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4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to
check if Horses have the required
Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that
they meet all necessary legal
requirements for owning and
using guns.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when
purchasing a puppy there are
some simple guidelines you can
follow to ensure that you are not
purchasing from a Puppy
Farmer.

1. Try to ensure you visit the
puppy whilst it is still with it's
Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a
puppy from any other location
than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any
KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News
Association publications take
great care to avoid publication
of advertisements from Puppy
Farmers we cannot accept any
liability should readers
purchase from this kind of
establishment.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to
take appropriate professional
advice before entering any obli-
gations.

8 Motoring

cars over £1500



**BMW 3 SERIES 2.0
320D M SPORT**
Two door Coupe, 2011, 11 reg.
Automatic with paddle shift.
Xenon lights, 19ins low profile
tyres, red/black leather, rear
privacy windows. High motor-
way mileage but not for BMW.
Must be seen. Competitively
priced by private seller.
SOLD

**IDEAL
FIRST CAR**
CITROEN C1
11 reg
Low mileage
MoT, group 1 insurance.
Excellent condition.
£1,895.
07432 010478.

LOW MILEAGE
**CITROEN C2
VTR
PETROL
AUTOMATIC**
2008.
15,500 miles.
MoT'd.
Blue metallic finish.
£2,495.
07890 508896.

AUTOMATIC

HONDA JAZZ I-VTECH ES
Automatic petrol, 62 plate,
27,000 miles, full MoT, fsh.
Sale due to bereavement,
£6,200.
07719 869469 or 07877
205863.

HYUNDAI i10 ACTIVE
2013. 16,000 miles. Black.
E/W. Air bag. Air Con.
FSH. MoT. Met Paint. C/L.
One owner. PAS.
One year warranty remaining.
Excellent condition.
£3,995 ono.
07815 468783.



7 MUST BE SEEN
MINI COOPER S
2004/54 plate, six speed, grey,
half leather, CD, air con,
alloys,
new discs and pads,
MoT October, HPI clear,
clean car,
£2,500,
07546 779139.

4X4

RANGE ROVER VOGUE
2006, 11 months MoT, 102,000
miles, in good condition, with
SD design aero kit.
£9,000 ono.
07581 454773.

LOW MILEAGE

RENUALT CLIO INITIALE
1.6 VVT 111
2006. 5 door. Hatchback.
Champagne. Leather interior.
Alloys. Tinted windows. Climate
control. Cruise/ Speed control.
E/W, E/M, CD radio. 36,000
miles. MoT'd. FSH. Rare
model.
£2,750.
01384 401209/07739 837137.

**VW PASSATT
HIGHLINE TDI 105 1.9**
2008.
Gleaming Black.
68,000 miles.
MoT. Fully loaded.
Full leather.
£4,150.
07913 981460.



**HONDA ACCORD
AUTO V-TEC**
100,000 miles, green metallic,
electric windows, long MoT,
central locking, pas, sunroof,
alloys, year Dec 2000, X reg,
very reliable run around.
£300.
SOLD



LOW MILEAGE
HONDA CIVIC 1.4
Y reg., one lady owner from
new, genuine 48,000 miles.
SOLD.

**ADVERTISERS ARE
REMINDER**
that the Business Advertis-
ments (Disclosure) Order of
1977 requires that advertise-
ments must clearly
differentiate between Private
and Trade.



KIA RIO
2004. 44,000 miles. 5dr. Silver.
ABS. Air Con. Long MoT. PAS.
Stereo. CD. Recent cam belt
change. Drives lovely, cheap to
run, Reliable.
£850 ono.
07462 766144.

NISSAN MICRA
2002. 71k miles.
5 months MoT.
Good runner.
£450 ono.
07826 778384.

NISSAN MICRA 1.3, 1998, 49,950
miles, 6 months MoT, blue metallic
paint, central locking, sunroof,
alloys, CD. £600. 01384 232561.

MUST BE SEEN

PEUGEOT 108 ACTIVE
2015 (65 reg), 2,778 miles,
purple, 5-dr, 1.0, careful lady
owner, no tax, very economical,
low insurance.
Excellent condition, as new.
MoT till Dec 24, 2018,
manufacturers warranty
expires Dec 24, 2018.
recently serviced
£6,600 ono.
01384 385663.

LOOK
FORD FOCUS 1.6LX
16v, silver, 2003, 53 reg, 5
door, hatchback, cl, pas, e/w,
alloys, needs, CD player, a/c,
120,000 miles, fsh, MoT May
2017, very good condition,
drives excellent.
Bargain £495.
Telephone 07515 121289.

FORD FOCUS LX

1.8 W REG
6 months MoT.
Good reliable car.
Clean interior.
£350 ono.
07960 737875.

MUST BE SEEN

FORD FOCUS ZETEC
1600, 55 plate, 3-dr.
Petrol, blue, 12 months MoT.
Recent service history.
Alloys, factory fitted CD.
Front and rear heated screens,
time belt done.
£850 ovno.
07870 241804.

BARGAIN

FORD MONDEO 2.0 GHIA
2004 plate, 84k,
same owner last 4 years,
Blue,
Long MoT.
£500.
07913 981460.



LOW MILEAGE
HONDA CIVIC 1.4
Y reg., one lady owner from
new, genuine 48,000 miles.
SOLD.



FIAT IDEA 1248CC DIESEL
05 Reg, MoT'd May,
good condition,
EW, CL, drives well.
£1,199 ono
07453 046600.

**EXCELLENT
CONDITION**
FORD FIESTA ZETEC 1.4
5dr Hatchback.
FSH, 03 plate
6 months MoT
Lady owner
Excellent condition.
£450.
01902 893582.



NISSAN MICRA 1.3, 1998, 49,950
miles, 6 months MoT, blue metallic
paint, central locking, sunroof,
alloys, CD. £600. 01384 232561.

MUST BE SEEN

PEUGEOT 108 ACTIVE
2015 (65 reg), 2,778 miles,
purple, 5-dr, 1.0, careful lady
owner, no tax, very economical,
low insurance.
Excellent condition, as new.
MoT till Dec 24, 2018,
manufacturers warranty
expires Dec 24, 2018.
recently serviced
£6,600 ono.
01384 385663.

MANY EXTRAS

PEUGEOT 206 SE

2005, 5dr, 1997 HDI, service history, £130pa tax, full MoT, blue, good condition, drives superb, AC, climate, four electric windows plus extras,

£1,050 ono.

07847 628131.

BARGAIN

RENAULT LAGUNA ALIZE

2000, 5-dr hatchback, sun roof, electric windows, CD player, new tyres, tow bar, very reliable Family / work car,

MoT April 2017.

£650.

01746 764455. 07772 836066.



ROVER 211

2000, 26,000 Miles, Petrol, Red, air bag, FSH, PAS, alarm, MoT October 2017, Stereo, 2 owners from new

£750 ono

01384 355969



SUZUKI IGNIS SPORT

2004 reg, 75,000 miles, 1.5L, two previous owners, Silver, abs, 12 months MoT, central locking, pas, Alloys, CD, Recaro Seats, Great Condition

£800 ono.

07402 867767.

BARGAIN

SUZUKI LIANA

1600cc, 2002, 5dr hatchback, petrol, silver, owned by lady past 2 years, approx 75,000 miles only, MoT Sept 2017, new battery, good reliable car.

£395 ono for quick sale.

07528 072920

After 6pm Monday to Friday.

Anytime Weekends.

IDEAL FIRST CAR

VAUXHALL CORSA

2003

1.2,

99,000 miles

5dr

Silver

FSH

12 months MoT.

£550 ono.

07591 440263.

MUST BE SEEN

VW POLO 1400

Full MoT, silver, good runner / condition inside and out, radio/CD, alloys.

£675 ono.

01902 862610.

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

CLASSIC CAR

MGB GT, 1968

Yellow, 38,000 genuine miles, part restoration by last owners. Valued @ £7,000.

Genuine reason for sale.

MoT Sept 2017.

Sell for £4,500 ono.

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scrap vehicles

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WANTED URGENT

Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available 0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

alan reed cars

Used cars wanted for cash Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call.

01562 711083 /

07831 245313

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

6

Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

ROOMS NETHERTON Refurbished with Parking. From £85 pwk Single, £95 pwk Double inc bills. No PSS. 07970 717139 or 07940 116130.

land

SINGLE BUILDING plot, Bradmore, planning permission for Bungalow. £45,000. Exchange considered. 07774 898966. 01902 747180.

overseas property

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SELL IT FAST SELL IT LOCAL

01902 317878



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FOR YOUR HOUSE

- Legal Fees Paid
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- Guaranteed Offer
- Repossessions Stopped

We can buy your house in 2

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01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms

pink run by women

sell quick

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- Any property
- Any condition
- Free confidential service
- Any area*
- Repossessions stopped
- Deceased estates

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Private Investor

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straight forward investment solutions

I CAN BEAT ANY PRICE!

I pay 100% of purchase price Call now for the best price for your house

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*Terms apply

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01384 226086



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Black Country Homes

For great business results call

01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds

Brought to you by Express & Star

Home Cash Buyer

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish £££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££

Houses / Land Required

Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089

Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154

Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049

Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901

www.homecashbuyer.co.uk



CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"

Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer

For great business results call

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ClassifiedAds

Brought to you by Express & Star

Need to sell your home fast?

We can help you make a fresh start

With solutions to suit ...

you can clear your debts and make a fresh start

Purchase Agreed Within 7 DAYS

ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED

COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT

FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS

FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE

LOCAL COMPANY

MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

WHY NOT CALL US TODAY for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?

0121 405 0797

*Terms and Conditions apply

OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

HOUSE WANTED FOR RENOVATION

or Extension or house with Land, wolverhampton area, cash waiting.

Call 07780 705991.

full time - general

7 Jobs

PHIL C PADDOCK BUTCHERS

require FULL/PART TIME

BUTCHER/COUNTER ASSISTANT

to work in a busy butchers in Hagley.

4.5 days Mon-Sat

Contact Phil on 01562 882211

or after 6.30pm 0121 550 6443

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on

01902 713146

or email marie.hogg@

expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

CISSIE LLOYD (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of White Cottage 7, Haywards, Cradley Heath, West Midlands B64 7JF, who died on 08/02/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 12/05/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

GEORGE GREEN LLP

195 High Street Cradley Heath

West Midlands B64 5HW

T4952306

10 Personals

personal



MALE, 60'S

Who enjoys live music, cinema, swimming and walking, seeking soulmate, aged 58-65 with a zest for life and a good sense of humour.

Photograph appreciated.

Box Number P20718,

Express and Star,

Queen Street,

Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.



MALE 65

SEMI RETIRED SELF EMPLOYED BUSINESSMAN.

Good looking.

Lots of interest, who should not need to advertise.

WLTM a special lady who should not need to reply.

Photo please (returned).

Box Number C20717,

Express and Star,

Queen Street,

Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

MATURE BRITISH INDIAN MAN

Would like to meet slim single woman for dating, wine bars, clubbing and general company

repay offers.

All replies will be answered.

Box Number P20716,

Express and Star,

Queen Street,

Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

sports clubs



BRIERLEY HILL BULLETS

Charter Standard Club

Est 1983.

Under 13's South.

Looking for players and

Goalkeeper.

Anyone in year 7 or 8 looking to

play Junior Football.

Contact Chris Coombes on

07806 810679.



PENN COLTS FC

Current school year 1 and 2

looking for players to form new

teams to play in Stourbridge

and District League.

Also parents interested in

coaching junior teams.

FA Charter Standard Club.

Contact Dave 07831 582978.

general

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

FOR SALE plot for cremation at Danescourt Cemetery Northall, £850. 01902 427559.

BUY LOCAL

SELL LOCAL

01902 317878

ClassifiedAds

Ford Performance reveals next-gen Ford Fiesta ST

By James Parker

Ford Performance has announced the next generation Ford Fiesta ST, powered by an all-new three-cylinder, 1.5-litre EcoBoost engine.

Shown for the first time ahead of its global public debut at the Geneva Motor Show next week, the next-generation Fiesta ST will deliver 200PS, 290Nm of torque and anticipated 0-62mph acceleration in 6.7sec.

The third generation of Fiesta ST will be the first ever Ford Performance model powered by a three-cylinder engine, and the first Fiesta ST to feature selectable Drive Modes – enabling engine, steering and stability controls to be configured to Normal, Sport and Track settings for an optimised fun-to-drive experience in conditions from motorways to track days.

Drive Modes will also adjust Fiesta ST's Electronic Sound Enhancement (ESE) technology and active exhaust noise control valve to deliver an even more satisfying driving experience. The technologies amplify the naturally sporty sound of the new 1.5-litre EcoBoost engine that also features Ford's industry-first cylinder deactivation system for a three-cylinder engine, for further reduced CO2 emissions of an anticipated 114g/km.

Available from launch in early 2018 in both three-door and five-door bodystyles, the next generation Fiesta ST will be offered with a greater variety of interior trim and personalisation options than ever before, with bold and distinctive exterior styling that includes a unique race-car-inspired mesh grille and exclusive 18in alloy wheels.



It will be available in three and five-door styles

"Our next generation Fiesta ST is true to the philosophy of delivering cutting-edge technology to enhance every facet of the responsive Ford Performance chassis and powertrain," said Joe Bakaj, vice president, Product Development, Ford of Europe.

"With selectable Drive Modes and an all-new EcoBoost engine delivering an unprecedented combination of performance and fuel-efficiency, the new model will deliver the most versatile, fun, engaging and rewarding Fiesta ST driving experience yet."

Part of Ford's EcoBoost range of petrol engines that also includes the multi-award-winning 1.0-litre EcoBoost, the all-new 1.5-litre EcoBoost engine uses technology including turbocharging, high-pressure fuel injection and Twin-independent Variable Cam Timing to deliver optimised performance and fuel efficiency.

The engine's three-cylinder architecture delivers naturally high torque at low rpm. Performance is further boosted by a new turbocharger that uses an optimised turbine design to build boost pressure faster and minimise lag for a more responsive and fun driving experience.

A new combination of port fuel injection and direct fuel injection technology helps deliver high power and responsiveness alongside reduced CO2 emissions, with a particular increase in fuel efficiency under light engine loads.

Ford's new cylinder deactivation technology – first announced for the 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine and a world first for a three-cylinder engine – will further improve fuel efficiency for Fiesta ST customers without affecting performance by automatically stopping fuel delivery and valve operation for one of the engine's cylinders in conditions where full capacity is not needed, such as when coasting or cruising with light demand on the engine. The technology can disengage or re-engage one cylinder in 14 milliseconds – 20 times faster than the blink of an eye – to seamlessly deliver full performance on demand.



The third-generation Ford Fiesta ST

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Smart ForTwo is given extra grunt

By James Parker

Thanks to its innovative and quirky design, the Smart car is one of the most recognisable on the road.

The latest model brought with it greater levels of technology and comfort. Now, esteemed tuning company Brabus have taken the ForTwo and breathed a little extra fire into it.

The car's three-cylinder engine now has extra power, and the suspension has been lowered to give the Smart not just better handling, but a meaner stance on the road. Add to that a muscular bodykit, and you have a Smart that distances itself somewhat from the cutesy image that comes with the standard car.

As previously mentioned, the Smart Brabus ForTwo is slightly more aggressive-looking than the city car it's based on. You get a sports bodykit, 17-inch wheels and a rather sporty-looking chrome exhaust – which work together to give the car a much more substantial appearance on the road, and one which is much closer to that found on parent company Mercedes' vehicles.

Smarts have experienced varying popularity since the first City-Coupe hit the road in 1998. The brand's had its many ups and downs – but appears to be returning to form. With better levels of reliability, as well as consistently good safety scores, Smart is a brand that very much seems on the up-and-up.

At just 2,740mm long, you'd be forgiven for thinking the Smart Brabus ForTwo wouldn't offer too much interior space. Yes, compared to a conventional, it isn't too roomy, but given



Smart is a brand on the up-and-up

its diminutive footprint, there's a lot more room than you think. There's about 260 litres of boot space which, thanks to its depth, is more than enough for a weekend bag.

There are plenty of cubbies in the interior too, with a neat drawer that slides from underneath the gearstick – ideal if you want to keep items like mobile phones out of sight.

Despite its boxy proportions, the Smart is actually quite the hoot to drive. Thanks to Brabus' attention to the suspension, there's not much body roll. The engine, when linked to a surprisingly sharp six-speed dual-clutch gearbox, provides more than enough power which means that on country roads it's a fair bit of fun. It's not too unsettled on the motorway either, thanks to cruise control. It buzzes a fair bit at higher speeds, but it's not too tiring a place to be for a longer drive.

However, the Brabus is best suited to around town. It nips in and out of traffic with ease, and



Brabus ForTwo is slightly more aggressive-looking than the car it's based on with a sports bodykit, 17-inch wheels and chrome exhaust

parking is equally simple. You actually start looking out for the smallest possible spaces just to test yourself – and the car.

Fuel economy sits at a respectable 62.7mpg combined, which means you won't have to fill up all that often, and the small tank doesn't cost the earth to fill either.

The Smart Brabus ForTwo starts at £16,320,

rising to £19,135 for the higher-spec Xclusive model. There's also a cabrio version, though this commands a premium, with the base car retailing for £18,105 and £21,275 for the cabrio.

This is a fair amount of money for such a small car. When you compare it to a standard hatchback, it does seem expensive, while

being able to offer only a limited amount of practicality, as well as room for only two.

If you're not worried about transporting too many things or people, but more concerned about low-cost city motoring, then the Smart Brabus ForTwo could be just the car for you. It looks stylish, has decent levels of standard equipment, and won't cost the earth to run.

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The new Ford Edge is a real beauty. It's got a sleek, aerodynamic design that makes it look like a sports car. And it's got a powerful 2.0-litre EcoBoost engine that gives it a top speed of 125mph. It's also got a lot of space inside, with room for up to seven people. And it's got a lot of features, like a navigation system and a rear-view camera. It's a real beauty.

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The design goes minor visual tweaks, the option of 4WD and a five-door bodystyle. The Suzuki Swift is a real beauty. It's got a sleek, aerodynamic design that makes it look like a sports car. And it's got a powerful 1.6-litre engine that gives it a top speed of 115mph. It's also got a lot of space inside, with room for up to five people. And it's got a lot of features, like a navigation system and a rear-view camera. It's a real beauty.

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Brindley Hyundai Aiming high with supermini

The new Hyundai Tucson is a real beauty. It's got a sleek, aerodynamic design that makes it look like a sports car. And it's got a powerful 2.0-litre engine that gives it a top speed of 125mph. It's also got a lot of space inside, with room for up to seven people. And it's got a lot of features, like a navigation system and a rear-view camera. It's a real beauty.

The Brand New Hyundai Tucson Arriving in the Brindley showrooms on 24th August.

Wraps off new Citroën C3

The new Citroën C3 is a real beauty. It's got a sleek, aerodynamic design that makes it look like a sports car. And it's got a powerful 1.6-litre engine that gives it a top speed of 115mph. It's also got a lot of space inside, with room for up to five people. And it's got a lot of features, like a navigation system and a rear-view camera. It's a real beauty.

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Relegation fight aside Jones is back for talk

EVEN a survival mission at the edge of the Football League won't stop the first manager to take Wolves into the Premier League returning to Wolverhampton.

Dave Jones has a relegation fight on his hands after coming back into football with League Two strugglers Hartlepool United, writes Craig Birch.

The 60-year-old had been booked to appear at the Cleveland Arms Sports Bar, on Stowheath Lane, on Thursday March 30 before accepting the top job at the Victoria Ground.

But Jones has confirmed with organisers Sports Talk Events he will be in the Black Country as planned for the date, where he's set for a warm reception from a healthy pro-Wolves crowd.

Wolves legend Steve Bull will join him as a second special guest.

Jones was in charge at Molineux from January 2001 to November 2004. His crowning glory came in the 2003 Championship play-off final, where he masterminded Wolves' triumph and lifted the only trophy of his 20-year plus managerial career.

They emphatically defeated Sheffield United 3-0 through a first-half blitz at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

Trophies to hit road in cricket double promo

TROPHIES for the ICC Trophy and Women's World Cup are to hit the road ahead of this summer's cricketing tournaments.

Dates have been announced when they will take to the streets of the host cities. Sponsored by Nissan, the Trophy Tour will see both the ICC Champions Trophy and ICC Women's World Cup spend 31 days travelling around the seven cities. They will start in Taunton on May 2 and finish at The Oval on June 2 for England v Bangladesh. The tour will be in Birmingham from May 13-17.

ICC Chief Executive David Richardson said: "The Trophy Tour is the start of what will be a fantastic summer of cricket in the UK with two major back-to-back events – the ICC Champions Trophy followed by the ICC Women's World Cup."

The two trophies will visit schools, clubs, venues and landmarks throughout May. Full details of all the activities will be announced in the coming months.

Nissan Global Head of Marketing and Brand Strategy Roel de Vries added: "We partnered with the ICC to bring cricket fans closer to the excitement of the game."

I'm ready to bounce back, says Zaber

OLD HILL boxer Manny Zaber is ready to bounce back stronger as he returns to the ring on Saturday following a first career loss last time out.

Zaber suffered defeat at the hands of Josh Baillie in the first title bout of his pro career on November 19. The 22-year-old suffered a cut above his left eye, forcing his team to make the decision for him to retire in the fifth round.

The 'Pac Man' is set to return to the ring on March 4 at Walsall's Town Hall and insists he can't wait to get back in there.

"I'm ready to go now," he said. "I can't wait just to get back in the ring."

Saturday will mark Zaber's 10th fight since turning professional two years ago. He is joined by a host of Black Country boxers on BCB Promotions' No Guts, No Glory show.

Walsall super lightweight Luke Paddock headlines in an eight-round contest alongside Tipton's Ricky Summers, Wolverhampton bantamweight Kyle Williams also features.

There is also women's boxing on the card as West Bromwich welterweight Lauren Johnson makes her professional debut.



Harry Worrall has been refereeing junior football for over 40 years



Awards ceremony – Harry Worrall with Kelvin Brittain

Ref Harry has no plans to blow full-time whistle

HARRY WORRALL may have reached another impressive milestone, but he has no plans to blow the full-time whistle on his refereeing days.

The 78-year-old from Deansfield has been honoured by the Wolverhampton Referees' Association for 50 years sterling service and is determined to add a few more seasons to his tally.

Football League official Ray Olivier checked in at The Clarendon to present the award as Worrall joined Alex Hamil and John Kyte in an exclusive club with 50 years under their belts.

And Worrall is still going strong. He can be found calling the shots from the middle or chugging up and down touchlines across the Black Country in the Midland Junior League, Wolverhampton Sunday League and Bilston Youth Partnership.

And the 'old school' virtues are still very much on display. While some modern-day refs relish being in the spotlight, Worrall has always been happy to go unnoticed.

A quiet word here and there and a relaxed approach have served him well over the years, and helps ensure respect on both sides.

Respect

"I have really enjoyed it, and still do. That's why I carry on," said Worrall. "I am not as fit as I used to be, but I still get around and I have a lot of experience."

"I have had a bit of stick at times, but nothing major. It's all about man-management and how you talk to the players. You see the refs on the telly pointing their fingers and shouting 'come here' to the players. I never did that. I have a quiet word and talk to them in the right manner and sort things out. You have to talk to them properly to get their respect."

"I hadn't used to dish many cards out, in fact I haven't shown anyone a card for 20 years. The good refs are the ones that you don't notice."

Worrall first got the refereeing bug in English football's golden year, 1966, when he swapped playing for officiating.

"I used to play for Star Aluminium in the Wolverhampton Works League," he said. "I played at right-back and then ended up in goal! Someone mentioned

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Nick Elwell

As long as I can get up and down the pitch, I will carry on."

that the league were struggling for referees, so I went along and took the course. Within three seasons I had got my Class One, which was the top rank.

"I have really enjoyed it and made some really good friends over the years. My only regret is that I didn't start at an earlier age. Who knows, I might have got to the very top if I had done?"

"I intend to carry on as long as I can. I still think I have another two or three seasons left. As long as I can get up and down the pitch, I will carry on."

Worrall has plenty to be proud of during his whistle-blowing days with a day out at Wembley one of the many highlights, while he also caught an early glimpse of a talented youngster by the name of Wayne Rooney.

"I refereed the final of a Coca Cola Tournament at Wembley, but I can't remember the teams," said Worrall, who also officiated in a girls tournament in Minnesota as well as numerous local league finals.

"But I can remember taking charge of an England Schools game between Wolverhampton and Liverpool and Wayne Rooney played for Liverpool. I checked the name after the game because he played really well and looked a very good player."

"I refereed a Central League game at Wolves and Steve Bull played. He was facing a ban so he had a run out for the reserves against Peterborough and scored five times."

"I have had a laugh with him about that a few times over the years, he said it was the only time he scored five goals in a game. I was also the ref for former Wolves defender Frank Munro's testimonial."

Worrall is also a well-known figure around Molineux where he used to help in Wolves' press office on match-days.

"They used to call me Uncle Fester because I wore a big, long black coat," he joked. Not surprisingly Wolverhampton's most famous official Jack Taylor, who took charge of the 1974 World Cup final between West Germany and Holland, tops Worrall's list of best refs with another local ex-Football League man, Hamil, not far behind.

"I ran the line in a game once with Alex Hamil on the opposite side and Jack Taylor in the middle," said Worrall. "Jack was the best referee I have ever seen, number one for me."

"I got to know him quite well and he was a really nice, down-to-earth bloke. I still haven't seen a better ref than him. Alex was very good too, he had the players' respect and treated them with respect too"

Of the modern day officials, Andre Marriner gets a nod of approval from Worrall, but he is not too complimentary towards the pundits who sit in the studio.

"I do feel for the refs these days with everything being so analysed," added Worrall. "The pundits annoy me because they sit there in the studio and watch an incident over and over again from different camera angles and then slaughter the ref."

Difficult

"The ref only has a split-second to make a decision. People should have a go themselves and then they would realise just how difficult a job it is."

Worrall joins Hamil and Kyte as the exclusive members of the Wolverhampton Referees' Association's 50 club and is proud to be part of an elite group.

"It's a real honour to receive the award," he said. "And I am proud to be a member of the Wolverhampton RA, it's the biggest and best in the country with over 140 members."

"Quite a few family members were there to see me receive my award and Ray Olivier was brilliant. It was a nice night and a bit emotional."

WRA chairman Phil Reade was full of praise for his colleague's achievement.

"Harry is well liked by us all and what he has done is marvellous achievement," said Reade. "Ray Olivier said when he was on duty at Molineux, Harry always looked after him."

"It's unbelievable to still be refereeing at 78. He is one of those refs that says get on with it, it's a man's game. He used to man manage people really well."



Harry at presentation with head of professional referees development Ray Olivier and chairman Phil Reade



What a save – when Wolfie's head came Harry carries it out for him



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Perry's back on form with five victories

CRADLEY racer Tom Perry has been back on a bike for the first time since last season – and it was like he'd never been away.

Perry, who makes a return to the Heathens after two successful seasons on loan at Birmingham, romped to five wins in Scunthorpe's open meeting on Sunday. And he says he's raring to go for the new season with the Heathens looking to dethrone the Brummies in the bid for title glory.

He added: "I'm just really excited to get racing again now. I was back on a bike at Scunthorpe last weekend for the first time since October. It was only an amateur meeting but I won all five races and felt like I hadn't been off the bike at all to be honest. We've got some big meetings early in the season and it's important to get a good start."

The Heathens will launch their season with a special event with supporters at Cradley Heath Liberal Club on Friday, March 10. All the riders will be present and they will be handed their 2017 race jacket by Dean and Adam Bridge from loyal club sponsors Motor Market.

They will then travel to Perry's former club, Birmingham for a challenge match on Wednesday, March 22 before hosting King's Lynn at Perry Barr a week later.

Their return to Monmore Green will come against Mildenhall on Easter Monday (April 17, 7.30) – and Perry can't wait to get started.

Perry is also relishing a battle for top spot in the Heathens team with high profile signing Danny Ayres level on his riding average going into the campaign. He said: "It's good to have two experienced riders at the top of the team, but it doesn't really matter too much who is at No.1. I get on well with Danny. We've known each other for a few years now and I'm looking forward to riding with him this season."

Yeltz held to draw due to dangerman striker Mwanyongo

Halesowen Town 1 Barwell 1
HALESOWEN and Barwell shared the points in a competitive but even contest last Saturday.

On-loan Solihull striker Pearson Mwanyongo was Barwell's main danger-man and he was denied from an early corner before he curled a 13th minute effort at Yeltz goalkeeper Dan Platt.

After a goalless first half, Barwell had the blustery wind on their backs in an end-to-end second period.

The Yeltz grabbed a 57th minute lead when Ethan Delaney squared the ball for the unmarked Danny Bragoli to calmly convert a low shot under goalkeeper Max Smith-Varnam.

The hosts almost doubled the lead five minutes later when Delaney shot just over. But Barwell hauled themselves back as Lee Hildreth nodded wide and deservedly equalised in the 76th minute when Mwanyongo drilled a low shot into the bottom corner from the edge of the penalty area.

Tuesday's game at Ilkeston was called off. On Saturday, Yeltz travel to Workington.

Stour trio help England Counties win



Sam Baker, Nile Dacres and Pete White

AN ex-Stourbridge trio featured in England Counties 45-28 win over Scotland Club XV at Birmingham Moseley RFC, avenging defeat in last year's clash.

Featuring were replacement winger Sam Baker (currently with Amphill & District in National League 1), 2nd row Nile Dacres (Plymouth Albion) and scrum half Pete White (Coventry).

England opened the scoring through hooker Matthew Miles but Scotland responded when George Taylor weaved his way through. Steve Leonard ran in to score

Rugby

but the final try of the first half went the way of Scotland wing Jordan Edmunds.

The second half saw Edmunds score again but England closed the gap through the boot of fly half Joe Tarrant. From the restart Leonard made a fed Leo Fielding to run it in. The floodgates then opened for England Counties with three further tries through Stokes, Fielding and Leonard. John Cox scored a consolation.

GLASSBOYS IN POLE POSITION

Stourbridge 2 Stafford Rangers 0
STOURBRIDGE seized control of a frenetic clash to beat fired-up Stafford Rangers 2-0 and cement their place at the head of the play-off pack.

Goals from Jordan Archer and on-loan defender Dan Preston at either end of the match saw the Glassboys through but Boro more than played their part in an engaging encounter.

Within 90 seconds, Shrewsbury Town loanee Ethan Jones was slipped in to hit the crossbar from the right side of the box for the hosts.

Josh Gordon, understood to be on the verge of a move to Leicester City, appeared offside but cut back for Kyle Perry to spurn a golden chance for Stafford as Matt Gould saved at his feet.

The opener arrived when Stuart Pierpoint lofted a well-weighted ball for Archer to force his way through, round Adam Whitehouse and calmly finish 11 minutes in.

Perry's first-time hit towards an open goal from Gould's hurried clearance bounced wide and the visitors' big target man was thwarted at point-blank range when his instinctive near-post volley flew straight at the stopper.

The tempo remained brisk without any further chances before half-time and Stourbridge tightened things up after the break.

Leon Broadhurst narrowly cleared the angle from Tonks's long throw on 53 minutes as Rangers were kept at arm's length.

Preston later headed over a Tonks free-kick before the same combination sealed the points with seven minutes to play. A third corner was played to skipper Tonks whose centre was crashed home at the far post.

Whitby 1 Stourbridge 3

The Glassboys had to soak up pressure in the wind after conceding Dale Hopson's well-struck free-kick inside three minutes.

A long Tom Tonks throw was nudged home by Benbow on 56 minutes but Darryl Westlake almost gifted promotion rivals Whitby a second with a short back pass with Matt Gould called upon to save from Michael Roberts. From there, Stourbridge did not look back with Benbow involved in the melee that saw the second fly in. It was eventually credited to Tonks, who had taken the set piece. Ethan Jones made the points safe.

Nick is reaching great heights



Pole vaulter Nick Cruchley from Stourbridge in action at Sheffield at the BUCS National Finals

POLE VAULTER Nick Cruchley was delighted to get back towards his best as he bagged himself a bronze medal at the BUCS National Finals.

The 27-year-old from Stourbridge – a PhD student at the University of Birmingham – soared to 5.30 metres at the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) event in

Sheffield. "I got 5.30m and I was attempting 5.40, which is two centimetres below my PB, so it's good to be back up to where my PB is," said Cruchley.

"I don't know how many BUCS I have competed at, but this was probably the toughest one for me."

British Universities & Col-

leges Sport (BUCS) is the national governing body for Higher Education (HE) sport in the UK, organising leagues and competitions for more than 150 institutions across 52 different sports.

BUCS Nationals is the UK's largest annual multi-sport event, bringing over 6,000 athletes to Sheffield.

DKs in 'FA Cup' of cross country runs

AFTER bringing the cross country season to a close a fortnight ago there was one fixture left on the calendar for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club to compete in – and what a race to finish with, the National Cross Country Championship. It's the equivalent of the cross country runners FA Cup final.

With the race held on a three year rotation with the North, Midlands and South taking turns, this year was the turn of the Midlands with the race held at Wollaton Park in Nottingham.

More than 8,000 runners entered in various races across gender and age groups.

The ladies were off first running over a three lap course covering 8k with some inclines and long stretches of boggy ground. Helen Tromans was first home for the hoops in 304th place in 38.35, Hannah McGuire was 492nd in 42.49, Carrol Fisher finished in 47.43 to take 660th place and Cilla Harding was 753rd in 53.52.

With the ladies teams restricted to just four runners, the DK ladies were placed 80th in the country of the 93 clubs.

With a couple of drop outs, the men were unable to field a team in an event where clubs needed to run six athletes to count but the four sixths of a team remaining still made the trip to represent the club knowing they wouldn't appear in the team rankings.

On a similar course to the ladies but a lap longer, Rob Sannwald was first back, getting the best of a prolonged battle with Mark Homer over the 12k course with each taking it in turns to lead.

Sannwald stalking his team mate for the best part of the last lap before coming home in 55.37 in 1031st place, Homer was only a few seconds behind claiming 1037th place in 55.44.

Depleted Old Hales taste Sheffield steel

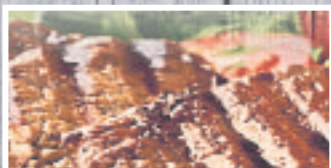
Old Halesonians 19 Sheffield 43
HALES were looking to keep the momentum going from last week's performance and signs were promising as Hales quickly took the lead following tries by Carl Robinson, Luke Smith and Ben Barkley. Ian Briggs converted twice for a 19-0 lead.

Sheffield did manage to break the scoring for the home side to go into the break 19-5. But the Yorkshire side came back after injuries to Chris Hooper and Owen Jones and yellow cards for Barkley and Ben Tibbets. With Hales down to 13 men for a time, Sheffield scored six tries with four conversions.

★★★

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